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COLLECTED ESSAYS OF RUDOLF EUCKEN

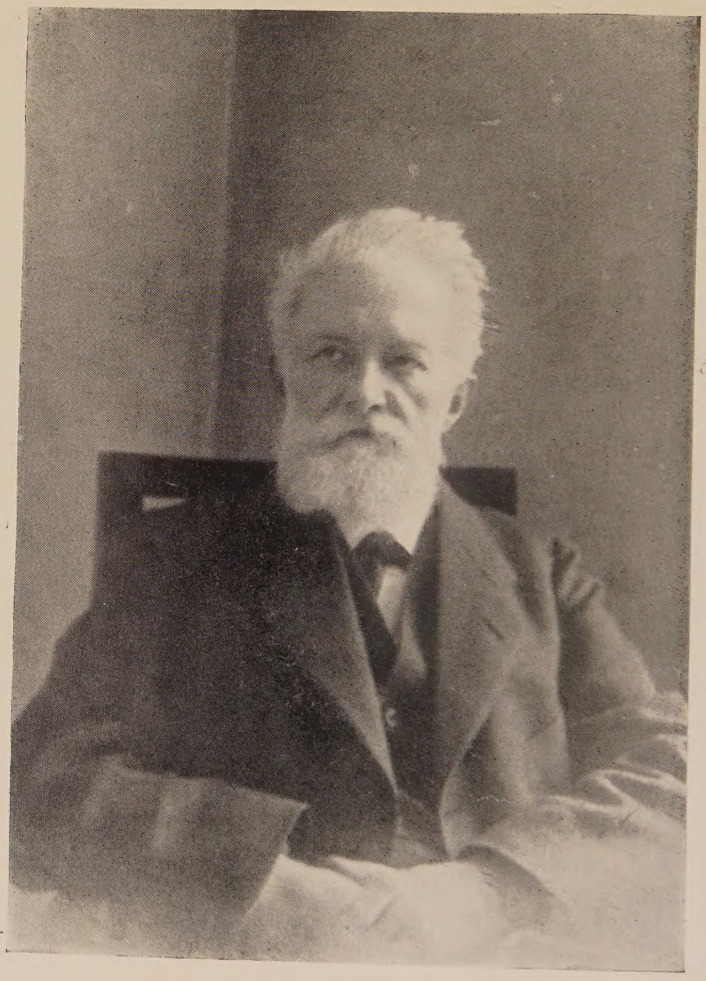
By the Same Author

MAIN CURRENTS OF MODERN THOUGHT

A Study of the Spiritual and Intellectual Movements of the Present Day. Translated by Meyrick Booth. Fourth Impression.

THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN LIFE

As viewed by the Great Thinkers from Plato to the Present Time. New and Revised Edition.



R. Eucken.

Frontispiece

COLLECTED ESSAYS OF RUDOLF EUCKEN

PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF JENA: NOBEL PRIZEMAN 1908

EDITED AND TRANSLATED

BY

MEYRICK BOOTH, B.Sc., Ph.D. (Jena)

AUTHOR OF "RUDOLF EUCKEN: HIS PHILOSOPHY AND INFLUENCE"

WITH A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

With three exceptions (*The Status of Religion in Germany, Are the Germans still Thinkers?* and *The Problem of Immortality* —for the translation of which I am not responsible) the essays included in this volume have not hitherto appeared in English. The lighter and more popular articles—in the early portion—will be found to throw a variety of interesting sidelights on the philosophy of Rudolf Eucken; while the heavier essays provide a material addition to our knowledge of the distinguished thinker's work.

In spite of the diversity of its contents this work acquires a certain unity by virtue of the convictions which permeate the whole. As is well known, Professor Eucken's *Activism* is based upon the recognition of an independent *spiritual life* (*Geistesleben*) as the ultimate basis of the whole of reality, and as the sole principle capable of explaining the sum of our human experience. This life sustains the entire structure of the universe, from inanimate matter up to the highest manifestations of man's intelligence and personality. Logic, mathematics, science, art, law, morality and religion are all modes of manifestation of this central life. Man is essentially a spiritual being, and a partaker in the originative and eternal reality; yet at the same time he is largely immersed in the life of nature (which is looked upon as a lower and unevolved stage of reality), and in order to realise his own being he must endeavour to ascend towards the higher levels of reality. But this cannot be done without effort and activity, without a pressing forward and an overcoming of resistance. Hence the term *Activism*.

All our human faculties—intellectual, æsthetic, practical, ethical and religious—find their only true function in promoting this ascent in the scale of being. Viewed from the standpoint of Eucken's philosophy, human existence is one vast process of the realisation and appropriation of spiritual reality. A unity and a meaning is thus imparted to the whole. All the difficulties and antitheses of our life ultimately subserve this great purpose. It is of the utmost importance, however, to bear in mind that this process is not automatic. *Man's active participation is essential to the movement of elevation.* Human evolution is no mere "unwinding of thread from a reel": it is a *creative work* in which man is a co-worker.

Eucken seeks to bring into the apparently almost hopeless chaos of modern life and thought a positive, unifying metaphysical principle—a principle that embraces all the different departments of human life and interest, scientific and religious, practical and theoretical, artistic and moral, and endeavours to assign to each its function in the task of the whole.

It will be found that all the following essays are inspired and connected by the central convictions thus imperfectly sketched.

The historical contributions are not mere records of past opinions. They are animated by a deep conviction that man's intellectual, moral and religious life is an ever-growing and ever-deepening possession, and that every great and sincere thinker contributes something to the advancement of the whole—notwithstanding the popular belief that the history of philosophy is a mere record of transitory opinions.

The serious student of Eucken will do well, I think, to read with especial care the two essays dealing with Goethe and with Concepts (Nos. XV and XIX). The relationship between the great poet's ideas and the philosophy of Activism is very intimate, despite important differences; and the treatment of Goethe's thought in this essay throws a very valuable light on Eucken's position.

"Does the *visible* signify everything, or does an *invisible* life

rule over it?" Thus questions the poet, and answers: "The world has an *inner life*, and that not only at its particular points, but as a whole. A single activity operates in all multiplicity and holds it together." Goethe finds that the antitheses of life are absorbed and reconciled within this embracing unity; yet he maintains, like Eucken, that this does not occur (in the case of unity and multiplicity) mechanically or passively, but through independent action on the part of the separate points. (This—with the following quotation—would seem to bring Eucken nearer to Goethe than to Hegel.) As with Eucken, the antitheses are essential to the progress of the whole; for example: "The inner is not complete in itself, merely needing subsequently and incidentally to express itself outwardly; it cannot shape itself and realise itself without the aid of the outer." Again Eucken concurs with Goethe in viewing this inner world-life as above and beyond all reflection and theory. It is no mere intellectual concept, but a vital and original activity.

The concluding essay draws our attention to the Problem of Concepts, a subject that is to-day fraught with an importance it would be difficult to exaggerate. Of recent years, so rapid has been the progress amongst us of moral and intellectual individualism and subjectivism, that language has become the sport of individual caprice. It must be a matter of common observation that the majority of modern controversies are made entirely futile by the lack of any agreement as to the exact meaning of the terms employed. Many (probably a majority) of our hardest worked concepts possess no definite and generally recognised content whatever; let the reader consider, for example, the following—"progress," "evolution," "religion," "social welfare," "education," "character," and "personality"—and he will perceive that their meaning has become so individualised that each is capable of being understood in dozens of essentially different ways. Under these circumstances no real discussion is possible. We sink into pure sophistry.

A serious consideration of the matter must convince us that

the very existence of a proper speech depends ultimately upon the recognition of a common thought-world, based upon a solid body of conviction with regard to life as a whole. In a word, without a positive metaphysic not only can there be no real culture, but we cannot even maintain a serviceable language. It will not be long before the modern world is compelled to realise that its favourite principles of non-metaphysical humanism and intellectual individualism are in a fair way to render all culture and civilisation impossible.

Rudolf Eucken would help us to transcend the disintegration and sophistry of to-day by pointing the way towards a new synthesis of life: "Those who recognise how imperative is the task of welding our civilisation into a more compact and purposive whole . . . will side with us in our retention of metaphysics and in the seeking of new paths along which to carry on the ancient task" (*Main Currents of Modern Thought*, p. 148).

MEYRICK BOOTH.

LETCHWORTH, HERTS,
March, 1914.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The following essays treat of widely different subjects; and it may at first be thought that many of them show no very immediate connection with the life of the English-speaking world. But although the problems in question are handled from the German standpoint, they are, in themselves, of universal human interest; while the personalities dealt with belong to the literature of the whole world. Moreover, in spite of the variety of the subject-matter, all the essays give expression to a single fundamental conviction and are thus inwardly united. In conclusion, I may voice the hope that the English-speaking public will bestow upon this book the same friendly goodwill for which I have been so sincerely grateful in the case of preceding translations of my works.

RUDOLF EUCKEN.

Jena,
March, 1914.

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RELIGION AND CIVILISATION

I

RELIGION AND CIVILISATION*

That the relationship between religion and civilisation involves many complications, is indicated, in the first place, by the manifold changes which it has undergone in the course of history. Even in the antique world, especially in its later days, this relationship was no simple matter; but it was upon Christian soil that the problem first developed its fullest intensity. From the very earliest times, men have been divided upon this matter: while some valued civilisation and culture, and particularly philosophy, as a preliminary and preparatory stage of divine truth, others were dominated by the idea of the opposition between religion and civilisation, and not infrequently uttered pointed expressions of indifference towards, or even of hatred of civilisation. The first broad solution was that attempted by St. Augustine, who created an all-embracing system of life, which, while leaving room for the work of civilisation, assigned no other task to its entire extent than that of leading man, through all his occupation with the multiplicity of things, and above and beyond this, to the all-dominating unity, the vision of which alone promises certain truth and blessed peace as compared with all the uncertainty and trouble of the rest of life. All the different spheres of spiritual life thus received an immense inspiration and consolidation; but the details of their construction became matters of indifference, and there was a disappearance of all independence and self-value on the part of objective work. The latter found more recognition in the calmer but more superficial mode

* From *Religion und Geisteskultur*, 1906; I.

of thought of scholasticism at the height of the Middle Ages. For although in this case, too, religion continued to form the ruling centre of life, it did not so directly dominate the other spheres; it permitted them a certain degree of independence. In particular, the idea of a series of stages permitted the lower to develop itself undisturbed in its own sphere, while still being subordinate, as a whole, to the higher; the conviction that grace did not supplant nature but completed it (*gratia naturam non tollit, sed perficit*), appeared to remove every difficulty. All impartial authorities upon the Middle Ages are, however, at one in admitting that in reality the outwardly subordinate obtained a powerful influence over that which was set above it, and, in particular, that philosophy gave religion an intellectualistic complexion. Thus it was a desire to liberate religion from disturbing additions, to re-establish its pure condition, which made itself felt at the beginning of the Reformation. Religion and civilisation now became more widely separated. Soon, however, and in particular after the beginning of the seventeenth century, civilisation began to move along paths which were entirely its own, at the same time more and more emancipating itself from religion. In this respect, the leading civilised nations exhibit different characteristics: the predominating tendency of English life was towards permitting religion and civilisation to exist side by side; in the case of the French, the two were apt to fall into irreconcilable conflict; while the German mind sought for an inner harmony, an overcoming of the antithesis. The highest achievement in the latter direction is to be credited to the age of our great poets and thinkers, the period of German Humanism; now religion and civilisation seemed each to complete and advance the other, within a comprehensive spiritual life. The nineteenth century again intensified the antithesis, and made the humanistic solution inadequate.

Thus history does not provide us with a solution; nay, it does not even offer us any orientation with regard to the path we should follow; and to-day the antitheses stand out with greater sharpness than ever. Many believe themselves able best to serve the purposes of civilisation by means of a radical rejection of religion, as a mere illusion; while on the side of

religion we see much vacillation and insecurity. Protestantism has split up into two movements, the first of which remains attached as far as possible to the position of the sixteenth century, granting to modern civilisation only such concessions as are quite unavoidable; while the other follows the banner of modern idealism with its panentheism, seeking merely to deepen this with the aid of religion. In Catholicism, too, differences are not lacking. For although the scholastic ideal with its harmonisation of religion and civilisation is predominantly retained, this takes place in two senses, the one strict and the other looser, and these give rise to different attitudes towards modern civilisation. Thus the Thomism of the present day has not only two different complexions, but also two different centres—Rome and Louvain. At the same time we note the hopeful beginnings of a modern Catholicism with the desire for a separation from scholasticism and a thorough understanding with our more modern civilisation. This juxtaposition and competition of different attempts, shows clearly enough what an urgent necessity there is, in this connection, for further work and clarification. And just as the experience of millenniums distinctly shows that every answer carries in itself a conviction with regard to human and divine things as a whole, so in the absence of such a whole conviction there will be no possibility of progress to-day. A passing consideration such as the present cannot do more than pick out a single point and through its discussion endeavour to throw light upon a particular aspect of the problem rather than attempt to solve it. Such will be our aim in the following.

We shall occupy ourselves with a single thought; namely, that while it is necessary that religion and civilisation should be independent of one another, yet each is dependent upon the other for its own prosperity. Those who recognise this fact will see the problem of their harmonisation from a characteristic standpoint. Union is most easily possible upon the point that religion must be independent of all civilisation; those who would reduce it to a means, however essential, not only weaken its force but endanger its truth. For it is essential to religion to reveal, with the relationship to God, a new life incomparably

superior to all human aims; this life may well work, nay, it must work towards the reformation of human relationships, but it does this only as a side issue and as a consequence, not of set purpose and as its principal task. Thus wherever religion rises up with original and spontaneous force we invariably perceive a remarkable indifference towards human and worldly things. The great heroes of religion, for example, were never social reformers, not because they lacked feeling for human need and suffering, but because they hoped for the deepest help not from the things of this world, but alone from the revelation of a new world. This independence of content must correspond with an independence of basis. Religion itself has to be responsible for its own truth, to construct its own organ of truth; it may not make itself dependent upon the result of the work of civilisation, on philosophy, history or natural science. For such a dependence would bring with it a painful insecurity: it would involve in all the changes of the ages that which, according to its very nature, demands eternity. Where religion must seek this organ of its own, and how it has to develop it, are matters of the severest conflict; immense confusion has resulted, in particular, from the fact that religion, which promised to impart to life a support more solid than knowledge itself, became itself imperceptibly converted into a particular sort of knowledge. But all such conflict, in spite of its dangers, cannot affect the necessity of the fundamental thought.

Moreover, the positions and psychic accomplishments of man appear, in the cases of civilisation and religion, to be completely different, nay, opposed. Since civilisation calls upon man fully to develop his power and bases his existence as far as possible upon his own activity, it demands self-confidence upon his part: only a firm and joyful faith in his own capacity can enable him to attack difficult tasks with spirit, and sustain him in all the unavoidable doubts. Religion, too, seeks to make man powerful and to elevate his life, but this it does, in contrast to mere nature, as a gift and through grace. The affirmation of life for which it stands takes place only through a negation of the mere man. A complete upheaval of the natural position is indispensable to the truthfulness of religion.

Such a difference in psychic position proclaims the independence of religion, and not less that of civilisation. If from the very beginning man thought little of himself and confined himself to the limits of his capacity, an energetic work of civilisation would never come into being. But just as it has its own attitude towards life as compared with that of religion, so civilisation needs independence for the content and aims of its work. A work, the result of which is prescribed by an imperative authority (as took place in the mediæval system, and as is still demanded by its disciples) is a miserable hybrid. It lacks freedom, a seeking and struggling of its own, an overcoming of doubt on its own account, and therefore lacks a true soul of its own, a complete taking up of the object in its own being. Moreover, civilisation will hardly find the energy and patience to penetrate the object, and hardly achieve the proper conscientiousness in work, if it cannot look upon itself as something with a value of its own, as an end in itself, independent of any outward relationship.

Thus religion and civilisation may easily appear as opponents, struggling for the soul of man. At the same time neither would seem able happily to perform its own task if wholly isolated from the other. With the abandonment of all religion, civilisation rapidly sinks into littleness, secularism and mere humanism; it threatens to fall away from its own idea. This idea demands a fundamental transformation of reality and an inner elevation of man; and for this purpose it cannot dispense with independence in relation to the immediate state of things, with a freedom from the interests of the mere individual, with a clear separation between a spiritual life founded in itself and governed by its own aims, and the ways and doings of human society. Only in so far is a civilisation genuine and full of content as it separates itself, as a spiritual culture, from merely human culture and becomes the revelation of a spiritual world. Is it to be supposed that such a spiritual world can be attained and firmly established in the human sphere, in the face of all the immense inward and outward resistances, without some sort of direction towards religion? In reality a true and transforming civilised life has never been developed without a relationship (though often,

perhaps, a concealed relationship) to religion: even if the superworld stands in the background of life it continues to illuminate the latter, and only with its help is the littleness of daily life overcome. Moreover it must not be forgotten that civilisation knows not only ages of confident and joyful upward effort, but also ages of error and confusion, of a laborious search for new pathways. And in such days of doubt, of search and of tentative effort, religion provides a support for mankind and maintains faith in the possibility of an inward renewal. Thus civilisation, if it takes a high view of itself and of its task, cannot dispense with religion.

If, however, there is an impulse from civilisation towards religion, no less is there an impulse from religion towards civilisation. Religion must not illuminate human existence as if from an alien world situated without; if it is to become a genuine power in life it must win over the whole man, penetrate the general human relationships and exert its influence in every direction. Otherwise it becomes narrow and petrified, and instead of acting as a world power and elevating the entire level of human existence, kindling at each point a life based upon perfection and eternity, it becomes a mere means of comfort for individuals, nay, only too easily a mere refuge for the weak. There have been ages which, while the life of civilisation remained stagnant, preserved an outward correctness in their religious position. Has religion itself flourished at such times? Has it not rather been shown that it is a blessing for religion to be the central point of a larger sphere, to be surrounded by an atmosphere of a more general spirituality? We should mention, too, that a supernatural construction of reality cannot well attain to full power and truth, unless, in the first place, the capacity of nature has been examined and its limits ascertained through our own experience; the transformation of the world which religion demands and must demand, must base itself and prove itself ever afresh. Not the least of the causes giving rise to a spirit of opposition to religion is to be found in the fact that many of its disciples have looked with contempt upon human capacity, and in particular upon the capacity of knowledge, without ever having put forth their own strength, with-

out ever having seriously taken up the struggle for scientific truth with all its labour and care. An equally serious cause is the idea of the evil world, from which it is said to be our duty to hold ourselves anxiously aloof. A limitation can be overcome truly only by those who have themselves experienced it; and there can be no experience without an entering into the life of the world.

Thus we see that, in actuality, religion and civilisation at the same time repel and attract one another, at the same time fly from one another and seek one another. This could not be possible unless life had a characteristic structure, and the life-process a characteristic formation. If spiritual life were in the first place the setting up of a comprehensive formula and a deduction of all manifoldness from this, the antithesis would remain an insoluble contradiction. And such a contradiction can be avoided only if our life is able to form independent points of departure within its own sphere, and to embrace within itself different and even opposed movements, the conflict of which advances life, preserves its freshness, and reveals to it a depth within itself. This subject leads us, however, into larger relationships than those with which we can at present occupy ourselves.

PHILOSOPHY AND THE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT OF TO-DAY

II

PHILOSOPHY AND THE RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT OF TO-DAY*

I

We cannot fail to recognise to-day a strong and ever-growing movement in the direction of religion. It imparts a greater power to the churches, and also works outside the churches, nay, against them. It appears in different countries and in different surroundings. It appears in manifold and very often extraordinary forms; but even in its most curious manifestations it exhibits its power. It does not conceal itself in the dark; but shows itself upon the brightest and loftiest summits of our civilised life. It meets with determined resistance; but it knows how to assert itself, and to compel even its opponents seriously to concern themselves with it. We may be in opposition to such a movement; but we cannot ignore it.

To recognise the extensive character of the manifestation is at the same time to exclude interpretations of a lower kind. That which so greatly occupies and excites humanity cannot be of artificial manufacture; it must be something more than a party product or a fashionable whim. Without doubt a crisis has been brought about by important experiences and serious complications in our common life; it is more particularly the upheavals in the innermost centre of our civilisation which have again rendered our minds more open to the influence of religion.

* From the *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik:* vol. 112, 1899.

There can be no doubt as to the greatness of the work of our age. This work increasingly opens up the world and subjects it to us; it develops our powers; it enriches our life; it leads us in a triumphal procession from victory to victory. But although, when regarded in detail, all this appears to be so much indisputable gain, it becomes converted into a difficult problem, as soon as it is valued as a whole and makes itself felt as such. These brilliant triumphs over the world fail to bring any adequate satisfaction to the inner man; nay, it would seem that it is precisely this development of power which makes us feel the limits of our capacity, and that progress itself gives rise to ever greater complications.

Exact investigation has enabled us to obtain a clearer view of the phenomena of life and to bring them under more and more simple laws; but the things themselves have at the same time retired to an ever greater distance, and the human soul itself has become more and more disintegrated into separate phenomena. From a better development of intelligence we hoped for an elevation of the whole man and an improvement of all his circumstances; but as this movement progressed the intellect took up the whole psychic realm and caused life to become inwardly narrower; while at the same time the greater mobility of thought gave rise to an unchartered subjectivity, an empty but over-bold mental attitude, a sophistry inimical to all objective truth. The period of modern enlightenment was devoted to an effort to bring human culture from the heights into the valleys, to communicate to as many persons as possible the hard-won results of the lonely toil of the leading minds. But if civilisation now penetrated the masses more than it had ever done before, this extension was not accomplished without a sinking of the inward level, and a greater coarseness and superficiality became apparent. We have imposed our will upon nature in a manner which would have appeared fabulous to previous ages. But while outwardly we have been victorious over the things, in an inward sense their mechanism has triumphed over us, and all our relationships are becoming dominated by a despiritualising routine. Machine-work and democracy, together, have produced those complications and

ntensifications of the social question which more and more ake up all our attention, and set the whole world in a state f breathless excitement.

Thus the aims which we have had before our eyes have indeed been achieved, but we have found them to involve something very different from what was expected. The more work takes to itself all our powers and thoughts, the more painfully we become conscious of the lack of an advancement of the inner man, and of a satisfaction of his passionate desire for happiness. At the same time we are conscious of doubts with regard to the work as a whole; we are compelled to ask if our modern culture is not too exclusively a development of mere power, and too little a building up of our essential being; whether, in its anxious concern for the environment, it does not neglect the problems of our inner life. There is revealed, further, a painful lack of moral capacity; we feel ourselves defenceless in the face of the selfish interests and the fierce passions which surround us; humanity becomes increasingly split up into hostile sects and parties. And in such a state of doubt, those ancient, eternal problems which have faithfully accompanied the whole course of our development awaken to fresh vigour. In earlier ages, it is true, they were not finally solved, but merely somewhat softened down and stilled. Now, however, they come to the front again without any sort of softening or concealment; we are exposed to the direct force of all the mysterious elements of human existence, to the obscurity which surrounds our origin and destiny, to the terrible power of blind necessity, to all the accident and suffering in our destinies, to the lower and uglier side of the human soul, to all the difficult complications of our social life. Everything comes to a point in the question whether our existence has a meaning and value at all, or whether it has been cleft by such a deep division that truth and peace remain finally denied to us.

It will be of no avail to fly from this doubt and seek refuge in the advice given by Voltaire in *Candide: Travaillons sans raisonner, c'est le seul moyen de rendre la vie supportable;* for we cannot perform mental and spiritual work without reasoning, and we suffer more especially from the fact that our work

cannot fill up our whole life. Nor is there any solution along the lines of that saying of Vauvenargues' which was so eagerly welcomed by Comte: *Le monde est ce qu'il doit être pour un être actif, c'est-à-dire fertile en obstacles;* for this could satisfy us only if our strength was equal to the difficulties, and the obstacles always served to provide an impulse for the enhancement of life. But what if the obstacles appear to be insuperable, and if our effort grows weary in a useless conflict with them?

In a word, we find ourselves to-day in the midst of a severe spiritual crisis. It is therefore easily comprehensible that a dark pessimism spreads more and more amongst us, and that in the midst of all our triumphs we are conscious of an oppressive feeling of littleness and weakness. But such a discontent is nevertheless capable of directing our thoughts in quite a different direction. Does not the fact that all our expenditure of power, all the greatness of our achievement, all the brilliance of our human culture cannot satisfy us, reveal, with sufficient clearness, the presence within us of a greater depth? Would it be so impossible for us to lose ourselves in outward work, if there were not within us a central depth superior to all mere work? Could we feel so small, if we were not compelled, even against our wish, to measure our own being against higher standards? A littleness which itself causes such intense feeling and such burning pain bears direct witness to greatness, however much concealed or limited: *Qui se trouve malheureux de n'être pas roi, si non un roi dépossedé* (Pascal).

If, however, this be granted, the feeling of littleness can transform itself into a violent desire for salvation, for the development of this greatness which is latent in our being; and out of the upheaval there may break forth an elementary aspiration towards a more genuine life grounded in essential things, a craving for more depth and more simplicity, for a more solid spiritual actuality, for a more powerful consolidation of all the reason which we are capable of attaining, for a valiant struggle against the falsity and superficiality of the everyday life of civilisation. When, however, the consciousness of human littleness and weakness continues to exist side by side with this desire for greatness, does it not become our obvious task to seek for new

spiritual relationships and to await help from their superior power? Does not this standpoint suggest an explanation of the movement towards religion? However much of what is little and egoistic may be involved in this aspiration, the main impulse is nevertheless man's struggle for the salvation of his spiritual being, for the overcoming of all the irrational forces which are working to oppress and destroy him. And when such a desire once makes itself felt and develops to full consciousness, it will force everything else into the background and know no appeasement until it has found some sort of satisfaction. For nothing less than the highest we know is here at stake; and in the whole of infinity nothing can possess any value for us if the hostile powers triumph at this decisive point.

II

There can, therefore, be no doubt of the earnestness of the movement towards religion. But with regard to the question of the path which the aspiration should take, there is an abundance of conflict; and in this conflict philosophy is called upon to take part. It is the ecclesiastical system which, in the first place, offers its help to the struggling and inquiring mind; here we have a colossal organisation resting upon the basic pillars of authority and tradition; from this standpoint the inner complication of the new age, the errors of civilisation with regard to its own ideals, are looked upon merely as a confession of the failure of everything which pursues its own path in opposition to the Church; this system thus demands the abandonment of modern ideals and a simple return to the old order of things. A voluntary submission to the traditional norms, will, it is believed, liberate men from all the doubts of the present day and set their lives upon a solid rock of truth.

It is by no means difficult to understand the desire for such a firm hold in the midst of the prevailing confusion; it is a question only, of whether the matter can be settled by mere good will, and whether this reaction can in truth accomplish that which it promises to perform.

A sharp criticism of modern tendencies is in accordance with the inclination of the present day; in particular, we fully realise the inadequacy of the Enlightenment, with its rationalism and optimism. But the work of the modern age is by no means exhausted in these problematical tendencies; through actual achievements it has effected immeasurable alterations, not only in details, but in our whole method of thinking and feeling, which it has fundamentally reshaped. These changes have sunk so deeply into our being that to withdraw ourselves from them means nothing less than an abandonment of any participation in the spiritual movement of the present day. The ecclesiastical system, however, has cut itself off from these changes; and we cannot simply readopt it in its unchanged form without retreating from the present into the past. A consideration of the deep-going results of modern work will show us how much stands between us and such a retreat.

The modern era, in the first place, altered the position of the human subject. The latter no longer stands for a mere portion of the existing order; the subject no longer receives its content from without and finds its chief value in accomplishing something for the environment; it now becomes the central point of life and is itself the object of its own efforts. In the realm of pure philosophy it was Descartes, in particular, who carried out this change; for he placed the Archimedean point in the thinking subject and from this standpoint moved the whole of reality. The movement from object to subject, which had been predominant for thousands of years, now gave way to a reverse movement from subject to object. Now, nothing can be received by us from without in an unchanged form; for that which comes from without is no more than a stimulant, and the main work has still to be performed within. Moreover, the subject cannot strive to pass beyond its own circle unless moved by reason lying within itself; and an absolute being cannot be given it from without, but must first appear within, must first exhibit itself within the life-process. The modern man refuses to recognise as true that which is not brought into a state of convincing clarity. In the effort to pass beyond himself he distinguishes sharply between a fact and its interpretation,

between what is directly experienced and what is deduced as a consequence; he tries clearly to define the limits of our spiritual capacity and conscientiously to observe these limits; all the half light of mere presentiment, intimation, suggestion, or allegory—the favourite refuges of more childish ages—disappears before his manly desire for a fully conscious life. All this does not contradict the fundamental truths of religion, it is true; but can it easily be reconciled with the mediæval form of religion?

Still stronger is the effect of the practical liberation of the subject. This causes the centre of life to be transferred from the surrounding organisations to the interior of man's personality, and in this way the life-process experiences an immense deepening. Man now regards himself as a microcosm, and demands a fresh and specific experience of all the destinies of the great whole in his own inward life. This does not signify the rejection of each and every bond; but it does signify the rejection of all those bonds which are not rooted within. Everything which claims superior authority must now justify itself before the bar of conviction and conscience. It is true that in previous ages such an inwardness was not absent; but its more powerful and self-conscious development has resulted in a new relationship between the individual and society, and in a new type of life.

Moreover, important alterations were consequent upon the development of modern natural science. Our earth was compelled to give up its proud position as the centre of the whole, and became, from an outward point of view, a unit of quite secondary importance; on the other hand, infinite expanses of time and space were revealed, which threatened to depreciate to the point of indifference all that could be accomplished by the individual point and the fleeting present. A qualitative alteration went hand in hand with this quantitative change. The bold and penetrating analysis of modern science split up nature into the smallest elements and the simplest elementary laws; and with these as a beginning the most complicated systems were built up and every relationship pieced together. The whole of nature thus appeared as a closely linked-up homogeneous system,

and every exception became a negation of the whole. Thus a miracle in the realm of the senses, a suspension of natural law, comes into contact with incomparably more difficult objections than those it had to meet in earlier ages, when the natural laws were merely a summation of regularities, "habits of divine conduct"; for in the latter case special circumstances could very well justify a peculiar dispensation. In the age of St. Augustine, a miracle, with its supernatural character, was something thoroughly natural; and even the struggles of the Reformation left the miracle in a perfectly safe position. The modern type of science, on the other hand, agreed with Spinoza in the conviction that anything supernatural within the realm of nature cannot be anything but unnatural. And finally, in the nineteenth century, came the theory of evolution, with its demonstration of the inward connection of the forms, and its transference of the formative forces into the sphere of nature itself. All this need not involve any injury to the core of religion; but it contradicts the traditional views. That which in earlier ages found a ready acceptance as the simple and natural view, now meets, at every step, with the most determined resistance.

Further, religion cannot withdraw itself from the influence of the more modern conception of history, from the development of a historical consciousness. The older view of history lacked a sharp distinction between the present and the past; it lacked, too, a criticism of tradition, and an aspiration to present the actual state of affairs in a purified form with the greatest possible elimination of the subjective factor; and it lacked, finally, the idea of unceasing movement in history. Upon the older level, observation and fancy were only too easily commingled, and more particularly on the horizon of historical tradition, heaven and earth, the divine and the human, seemed to come directly into contact with one another. But the situation has now become entirely different; how troublesome, how difficult is the path to the actual facts; and if we make an earnest demand for credibility and truth, how much of what we believed ourselves to possess are we compelled to abandon! And even that which proves itself able to survive criticism, becomes,

after passing through the cleansing fire, something absolutely different from what it was to the naïve view. Finally, we may ask: Can we expect religious people to regard it as a duty to be less critical and less conscientious in their historical investigations?

All this taken together produces a flood of facts and actualities which presses upon the modern man from every side. Religion, too, cannot avoid its effect; it must in some way come to terms with the situation. If it persists with undiminished zeal in maintaining the older form, then it enters upon an unceasing struggle, not only with the subjective tendencies, but with the substance of modern life. Even if the acuteness and skill of its representatives enables the older form victoriously to hold certain positions, yet, as a whole, this mediæval form cannot be maintained in the face of the world-historical movement; moreover, in order to attempt this, religion must spend its best strength upon problematical tasks, a strength which it imperatively needs for more essential and more vital problems. For religion will never have any lack of difficult conflicts. Its assertion of a new world, of a supernatural reality, with the defence of which it stands or falls, involves it in the sharpest opposition to the first appearance of things; it must effect an entire reversal of this view, it must convert the darkness and suffering of the world into light and joy, to depressing doubt it must oppose a joyful certainty, it must kindle a new and youthful life in men's hearts. And it is unavoidably led away from this central task and diverted from the region of its true strength, if, within the immediate world, it takes upon itself to oppose the views of science and the experiences of history. In so doing it goes against its own rightly understood interests, and lays itself open to the charge: *Urbem proditis, dum castella defenditis.*

Moreover, merely by retaining its ancient form, religion cannot possibly offer mankind that which the latter to-day demands from it. We are yearning for a rejuvenation of life, for original depths, for simple truth and pure beginnings. And what of all this do we obtain through a mere acceptance of the traditional system, with all its complexity? Must not religion,

too, exhibit a new creative activity; must it not deeply concern itself with the inner problems of the age and master the manifold elements in the modern movement which are favourable to its fundamental idea? Religion cannot truly advance the age unless it leads the spiritual movement of humanity. It cannot afford to evade the living problems of the day; it must overcome them. What is it other than a lack of faith in the power of the divine in history, to believe that the profound spiritual changes and the severe upheavals of the last few centuries have remained entirely fruitless for man's innermost life and for his relationship to the divine? Philosophy, on its part, must without doubt stand by the conviction that in these matters there are no epigones, and that eternal truth is not tied down to the speech of any particular age, that it can address us, not only in the manner of the fourth or the thirteenth or the sixteenth century, but equally well in that of the nineteenth or the twentieth, if only we seek it with whole hearts and receptive minds.

III

The renewal without which religion cannot accomplish that which the age awaits from it, is in the first place its own affair, and not the concern of philosophy. We have left behind us the ages which thought it possible to build up religion from philosophical concepts, thereby converting it into a mere view of life. If religion has not an independent being and if it cannot unfold this being in a new activity capable of dominating the age, then all effort on the part of philosophy is in vain. But the actuality of religion is not such as to force itself with complete obviousness upon all men; it must first be discovered, freed from obscurity and brought to full development. And a religion, moreover, does not work, as it were, by magic without any action on the part of man; he must, in the first place, be won over to it and devote himself to it with free personal decision. While it is undoubtedly true that the individual does not need philosophy for this purpose, yet it is equally certain that philosophy is necessary for humanity as a whole.

In a highly developed civilisation, in particular, religion cannot develop its full power unless it is able to justify itself to the scientific consciousness. And this leads us directly to philosophy. The deepest essence of religion, its position in life as a whole, its relationship to other departments, the views of the world and of life to which it gives rise—all these things provide philosophy with great tasks; and it cannot work at these without also gaining much that is of value for its own ends. The truth of religion cannot be recognised without an alteration in the fundamental idea of reality, and without knowledge itself attaining clarification with respect to its own aims and capacities. Nowhere more than at this point the chief tendencies of philosophy must take characteristic shape and exhibit their powers.

In earlier ages philosophy treated the religious problem predominantly from the standpoint of metaphysics. Beginning with the contemplation of the cosmic whole, it tried to push forward to a Divine Being; now by concluding, in the deistic fashion, from the purposive character of the scheme of nature, that there must be an intelligent and benevolent origin; now by perceiving, in the universal forms of the world, after the manner of pantheism, its inner relationship, the simplicity and immutability of its laws, its unceasingly ascending movement, and the direct presence of the Divine. Both these methods are to-day recognised as inadequate. In order, with confidence, to pursue the first of them, we must be able to obtain a deeper vision into the essence of the things themselves, we must have a greater trust in our own capacity for knowledge, than can remain to us after the revolutionary criticism of Kant; according to the second method, ontological and formal concepts acquire a religious content only by means of a continuous secret borrowing; imperceptibly they enrich themselves by drawing upon the richer and warmer world of religious tradition. In both cases the idea of God is no more than a mere part of the view of the world. How we are to obtain an inner relationship to it, how it may give rise to a transforming and elevating power, remains entirely inexplicable. Moreover, from the earliest times it has been not so much the conviction of

the rationality as that of the irrationality of our world which has imparted independence and power to religion. And to-day, even outside the ranks of the professional pessimists, we are far too much occupied with the mystery and suffering of the world to be able to honour it, in its immediate form, as a work of pure reason.

Thus the philosophical treatment of religion has turned away from a contemplation of the whole and sought a new foundation in the inner processes of the psychic life; the macrocosmic view gives way to the microcosmic, metaphysics to psychology. This is usually understood in the sense that the immediate self-existence of the soul, inward feeling itself, should open up to man a new reality and a characteristic life. In this inner feeling he appears to be liberated from the world of objects and to take his stand wholly upon his own inner life. And if he keeps himself strictly within this circle, he seems completely secure against all doubt and attack. This feeling gives man the impulse and the capacity to flee from all the cares and sorrows of daily life to a better world of faith and imagination, here to seek a pure happiness; at the same time there is developed the idea of a Divine Being, taking man under His protection. It is true that this world of belief cannot be demonstrated along the lines of scientific investigation; but neither can it be refuted from this point of view, since investigation concerns itself with the realm of experience only, while belief builds up a reality beyond experience. The more clearly we keep before us the boundaries of our own intellectual capacity, the more free room there appears to be for this realm of feeling. Thus there arises an inclination to form a very low estimate of this capacity and to deny it all right to occupy itself with Divine things. Along these lines Pascal developed a sharp antithesis between the head and the heart, and the Kantian distinction between philosophical and practical reason, also, is often made use of in this sense by the Neo-Kantians. Only when, in this fashion, feeling becomes the chief source of truth does religion seem to be liberated from all the complications of the cosmic problems, and to be in a position to influence man directly and to communicate itself equally to all.

To take inner feeling as the starting-point is thoroughly in accordance with the modern movement towards the subject; and it will hardly be possible, having reached this point, to return to the older cosmological religious argument. But special convictions with regard to this inner feeling and its position in the whole are necessary if we are not to pursue a false path; we find ourselves confronted at this point with an *either—or* which permits of no obscurity.

Is our human psychic life a mere fraction of the natural order, does it belong wholly to the realm of phenomena, and form no more than a particular circle together with other circles, then it can never, under any circumstances, lead us to a new world of real truth and universal validity. For in this case, in spite of all movement, it remains tied entirely to its own subjective conditions; and however beautiful may be the realm of wishes and hopes it weaves from these conditions, this realm remains nothing more than a self-constructed fabric of fancies and dreams. However much we may yearn for a better world, for the help of supernatural powers, the mere desire does not carry with it the smallest guarantee of its satisfaction: *L'intérêt que j'ai à croire une chose, n'est pas une preuve de l'existence de cette chose* (Voltaire). And further, how can such a religion of mere subjective feeling acquire a content which shall be definite, and elevated above the individual; how can such a vague religion react upon man so as to strengthen, elevate, and transform him? And how can it impart to him the power to overcome the immediate world and appropriate a new and more essential life? It is a desire of this kind which is to-day driving humanity in the direction of religion; and this desire can never be satisfied through the development of agreeable delusions which at bottom are nothing more than empty makeshifts.

With his inner life as a starting-point, man cannot seize hold of any genuine religion save under the condition that this inner life forms a part of great invisible relationship, that with the emergence of spiritual life there begins a higher stage in the development of the world, and that upon this stage the individual being does not form a mere isolated point, but

directly participates in the whole. Only when a world-process is perfecting itself in us and through us, and man is able to convert it into his own action, can we obtain experience of anything superhuman. Then alone is it possible for divine powers to reveal themselves to us and raise us above the whole realm of the petty human. Then alone is there any possibility of a philosophical foundation of religion.

Thus we are far from avoiding all metaphysic, we are merely transposing it from without to within. The concepts of our own nature and being must be transformed. In the microcosm itself a macrocosmic life is to be discovered, if from this point a pathway to truth is to be found. For this purpose there must be a definite distinction between creative spiritual life and empirical psychic life. In the former we have an ascent of reality to inner unity and complete independence; and this gives rise not only to new forms but also to a new content of life. The religious problem must be placed upon this basis: it is our task to examine whether the fact of a spiritual life imperatively impels us, in its development, beyond the immediate world and links us to a divine reality. Thus the religious problem demands not a psychological, but a *noölogical* treatment; this alone can find a way between the Scylla of abstract speculation and the Charybdis of subjective dissipation.*

IV

The noölogical treatment of religion is concerned with three main problems: the truth of religion in the universal sense; the actuality of a specific religion; and the relationship of immediate life and historical possession within religion.

The significance of the first question is whether the spiritual life, conceived as a whole and as active being, demands a foundation in a hyperempirical order, and whether, through its own development, it demonstrates the presence of such an order. This question cannot be decided without overcoming the

* These ideas are more fully developed in the *Kampf um einen geistigen Lebensinhalt* (1896) and in *The Truth of Religion* (trans. Dr. Tudor Jones, 3rd rev. edit. 1913).

confusion and chaos in which the spiritual life manifests itself on the average level of civilisation, without unravelling its customary entanglements with the petty interests of individuals and parties, without pushing forward from its scattered manifestations to a comprehensive view of the whole. When this takes place we cannot fail to recognise deeper roots and more inward relationships than those provided by experience. All spiritual life is an aspiration from the point to the whole, an expansion of the subject to a world, a measuring of all human achievements by ideal norms, a working and ruling of absolute quantities. Throughout, the action is raised above the interests of the mere individual point; throughout, an actual truth, a good in itself, is taken up into the will. How is all this possible, however, without the inner presence and the elevating activity of a unified power superior to all the isolation and division of the immediate world?

Even the work of pure thought itself is inconceivable in the absence of a living being at the foundation of everything and embracing everything. How could we otherwise aspire towards a universally valid truth above and beyond the psychic mechanism, and hope, with the aid of thought, to attain to being? In this work, is not the achievement of the individual unceasingly referred to an ideal consciousness and measured by this? The moral realm still more clearly exhibits in form and content a hyperempirical origin and a hyperempirical power. For it offers its good as something incomparably superior to all worldly interest, and proclaims its demand as imperative. Morality does not concern itself with human inclination or pleasure; but speaks to man as an "ought," as a duty superior to all self-will. It demands in actuality a liberation from the petty ego, a taking up of the others, nay of infinity, in one's own will and being; were this not so, how could love and justice, how could the compulsory power which the good and the beautiful exercise upon us, be possible? If immediate existence forms the ultimate basis and the highest aim of our spiritual nature, then the latter must lose its inward relationship and its motive power. But the situation takes on an entirely different complexion if this spirituality be looked upon as the

unfoldment of a life, more original, spontaneous and essential than that of mere humanity. And when this takes place through a universal religious conviction, spiritual life experiences a strengthening, a unification, an inward deepening. Thus regarded, the religious movement reveals itself as a complete self-realisation of the spirit, as a seizing of the deepest soul of life.

But this universal religion is not the sole form of religion; nay, it is not even the form in which religion has become an independent power and obtained a realm of its own. A specific religion does not result from the general fact of the spiritual life, but from a reaction against severe resistance and great complications within this life. It is obvious that in the human sphere the spiritual movement is no quiet development, no unresisted advance, but a severe conflict, not only with external difficulties, but against resistance from within; in this conflict the victory is often to the lower, which may even attract spiritual forces to itself, alienate them from their true purposes and with their assistance develop demoniacal power. Thus the process of spiritual development comes to a deadlock, reason seems unable to attain its goal, there results a severe crisis, our power is paralysed, and all the immeasurable labour of our life's work appears to be lost. The obstacles are too deeply rooted to be overcome through a gradual advance, through a slow gathering of forces; the movement of civilisation only makes the conflict appear more obvious. If therefore all power and spirit in life is not to collapse, there remains only one possibility, namely, that this overcoming should take place through the Divine itself, that through an attestation of new spiritual depths evil and suffering should be, not simply removed, but overcome by the revelation of a realm superior to them, to which man can be elevated through religion. Only in this way can it come about that peace and blessedness, unshakable confidence, purity of heart and a simple single-mindedness can be maintained in the midst of all conflict and suffering, doubt and care, complication and impurity.

This maintenance and vindication of the good in the midst

of outwardly victorious evil is the point at which the historical religions assert themselves, and at which each more particularly develops its specific character. Philosophy, however, can support this effort in the sense that within the spiritual life it recognises a general life and a higher stage developed by conflict, thus clearly distinguishing between a fundamental and an overcoming spirituality. Corresponding to this, in the life of civilisation, is a distinction between a world-embracing inner life and one concentrated in itself, a life within suffering and a life beyond it, a working towards the world as a whole and a life in the sanctity of inner feeling. All further development in detail remains in this case the affair of religion itself; ultimately, its own actuality alone can demonstrate its truth.

Man cannot recognise such a specific task on the part of religion and await from it a characteristic construction of life, unless he assigns to the historical development of religion, to the great religious bodies, and to the fundamental personalities, a much greater importance than is usually the case with religion of the universal kind. For although in the case of specific religion the central matter still remains that which can be directly experienced by each person, yet this religious life moves upon a superior level, as compared with the general forms of existence : it makes the greatest exertions to obtain a demonstrable form and to unite the separate impulses to a powerful whole. In this connection the world-historical work offers indispensable assistance, surrounding the individual, as it does, with influences radiating from the community, and, in particular, from great personalities. In their case, religion (and religion in its more clearly marked sense) became the motive force of the whole man ; it works from them to us with the imperative force of a complete and convincing reality, and acts as an inexhaustible stream of life. Therefore our own life must be connected with them and with the great relationships. The depth and actuality thus revealed can lead us further ; it can build up and consolidate ; it can become our own personal possession.

How many problems, then, arise from such a relationship

of the present to history, of the one man to the others, of the individual to humanity as a whole? And in working at these problems can we dispense with philosophy? How can that which outwardly lies behind us in the past, become inwardly a part of the living present; how can the experience and the creative work of the one transfer itself to the others; how can great personalities with their incomparable individuality become normative for the whole of humanity? And if, in all religions, it is a question of an elevation of life to eternity, how can the eternal find a relationship to time, how can it permeate the latter, so that, within all the complication, the growth and decay of the temporal level, it inserts its pure and ever fresh beginnings, surrounding and attracting man ever anew with the sacred glamour of the holy recollections of childhood? A highly developed civilisation cannot deal with these questions without the assistance of philosophy. Although the latter cannot with its own capacity create any actuality, it is indispensable to the appropriation of spiritual actuality and to the union of the latter with life as a whole.

Through the whole of the work upon the various levels of the religious movement there runs, finally, the one main problem of human existence; the problem of *freedom*, of the antithesis between freedom and necessity. Upon none of these levels can the movement towards religion be forced upon anyone and everyone by means of a logical demonstration: it remains a matter for our own personal decision. At the same time, however, it presents itself as an imperative truth, as something indispensable to everyone. Now in this world of causal order, where is there any room for freedom, and how is freedom of action compatible with the universal validity of truth? These are fundamental religious questions, and at the same time central problems of our life as a whole, and hence of philosophy. In taking up these questions, philosophy works not only for religion, but also for its own ends.

And in conclusion we may remind ourselves that philosophy may work side by side with religion not only in the struggle for a truthful content, but also in that for truthfulness of feeling. In no region of spiritual creation is this truthfulness

more seriously threatened than in the sphere of religion. According to its fundamental endeavour, the latter seeks to raise man above the limitations and complications of the merely human, to develop in him a new life; and it cannot do this without breaking with the pre-existing situation, without demanding severe renunciation and sacrifice. But at this point we are continually confronted by the danger that this transformation will not be effected with sufficient thoroughness, or that it will take place in appearance only; and in this case the spiritual forces which should raise man to a purer level will be dragged down to the service of human interests and of an egoistic desire for happiness. In every age there have been individuals who thus debased religion, and it is easy for society to follow their example. It can treat religion predominantly as a social institution, thereby forgetting that with such a reduction to a means for human purposes the vital nerve of religion is destroyed. It may also develop a religious utilitarianism. And if all utilitarianism operates destructively, in the sense that it drags the good which should draw men to itself down to the level of human needs, such a degradation will be peculiarly dangerous to religion, with the inwardness of its life and the delicacy of its motive.

The coarser forms of religious utilitarianism are easily recognised and rejected. To-day we have got safely beyond the mode of thought of those who sought to employ religion in order to obtain dominion over others, without themselves believing in its reality; in this connection Condorcet has justly remarked: *Toute religion qu'on se permet de défendre comme une croyance, qu'il est utile de laisser au peuple, ne peut plus espérer qu'une agonie plus ou moins pvolongée.* We feel it to be no less degrading to employ religion in the service of party movements. But in the case of honest conviction, too, it is possible for the utility of religion to occupy too large a place, and thereby to endanger the inwardness of life. Thus, to-day, following the social tendency of the age, religion is often defended as an indispensable condition for the peaceful intercourse of humanity, for the advance of civilisation, for the authority of justice and morality, and so forth. It is frequently

thus recommended as a means for the welfare of society by men who, at the same time, are not prepared to abandon religion as an end in itself. But all lack of clarity, all vacillation upon this point is disastrous; the end in itself easily sinks into the background when utility takes up the most prominent place; the inner then becomes subordinate to the outer, the eternal to the temporal, the truth to utility.

The struggle for the purity of its own motive is, in the first place, the affair of religion itself. But philosophy can coöperate in this task by exposing, with the sharpest criticism, the incompatibility of the various impulses, setting forth in all clarity the great *either—or*, and exposing, without mercy, the more subtle forms of utilitarianism. The latter is peculiarly injurious to religion in an age when it has a severe struggle for its existence and when it will hardly be able to attain to victory without thoroughgoing transformations. In such a situation as this, if ever, religion demands an original life, and in order to secure this the first condition is the full surrender of our inner feeling, as to a pure end in itself. In these matters there can be no truth without the strictest conscientiousness; but of truth we may say: *veritas fortior omnibus.*

THE MODERN MAN AND RELIGION

III

THE MODERN MAN AND RELIGION *

The modern man and religion may well appear to be wholly incompatible quantities. A decision for the one seems to involve the rejection of the other. It is the aim of the modern man to seize the instant in all its freshness and to mould life according to the claims of the immediate present; while religion directs the mind towards an eternal invisible order and (as compared with this) is apt to regard all temporal happenings as secondary, nay transient. The modern man yearns for unlimited expansion and an energetic development of individuality; it is only when each, in his own place, accomplishes something incomparable and indispensable that existence seems to him to acquire tension and value. But religion limits the scope of the individual by placing him within great relationships and subjecting him to strict principles. The modern man is filled with a burning life-feeling, a joyful affirmation of existence; confident of an unlimited capacity, he develops a proud self-consciousness and believes himself able to subject the whole of reality to reason. Religion discovers deep shadows in human existence, lays emphasis upon these shadows and increases our consciousness of suffering and evil; it appears to break the impulse of life and to approach a complete renunciation.

It thus comes about that in the consciousness of the age the two are for the most part looked upon as irreconcilable adversaries; and if this consciousness were decisive of the

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matter there would be no getting beyond the conflict. But perhaps the situation is not so simple, perhaps ultimately those elements which appear to be in such opposition are in reality necessary to each other's development. Let us consider, therefore, a little more closely what we understand by modern culture and by religion.

There can be no doubt as to the essential character of the modern movement. It consists in an acceptance of the life-process, and in the building up of reality upon the basis of the subject. According to the older mode of thought, on the other hand, the subject was connected more directly with the surrounding world, and life presented itself as an exchange of influences between the one and the other. A new epoch begins when man separates himself from the environing world and feels himself strong enough to stand upon his own feet, to move all the things from himself as the Archimedean point, and make himself the master of the whole of reality. This signifies the beginning of a thoroughgoing reversal and revaluation of all quantities. Man endeavours not only to dominate the world outwardly, but also to appropriate it inwardly, by converting it into his thought down to its last element. Thus we have a gigantic work, a heroic conflict, an unceasing expansion of life, a breaking forth of an infinity of being in an immeasurable breadth of life and activity.

But the matter did not progress so smoothly and happily as the youthful impulse of the awakening age had expected. For this more powerful development of the subject as compared with the things, at the same time enhanced the resistance of the things; it brought their specific nature for the first time to full development and perception. This is most clearly seen in the modern conception of nature as it takes shape subject to the sharper separation of subject and object. Since the subject takes out of nature all those spiritual qualities which had hitherto been imparted to it—for example, inner forces, aspirations and aims—leaving it a kingdom of mere masses and movements, nature acquires, in its soullessness, an arrogant independence and self-confidence which it now asserts in opposition to man. As compared with him, it presents itself

as a gigantic, immeasurable system of firmly interconnected causal relationships. And being thus strengthened it feels itself able to draw man to itself and as far as possible to absorb him. It clasps him with ever-increasing tightness, and the subject more and more becomes a mere drop in the ocean, an almost negligible quantity. Thus the movement has swung round and developed in a direction exactly opposite to that which was originally intended ; and man finds himself involved in the severest possible struggle for his spiritual existence.

This struggle has been taken up with spirit ; in the first place by the great thinkers. All the great thinkers of the new age may be looked at from the point of view that, while willingly recognising the natural world, they sought, at the same time, to confirm the superiority of the soul. Spinoza developed a magnificent conception of nature ; but he fashioned it so that all physical being is not only accompanied by thought but is finally grounded in and supported by an all-comprehending divine thought. Leibniz employed the greatest acuteness in order to demonstrate that all being must finally be a being-for-self and therefore of a spiritual character, and concluded that a psychic realm is the basis of the natural realm. Kant reduced the whole of nature to a mere world of phenomena and sought to open up to man the ultimate depth of reality through his spirit, a revelation which took place more especially in the moral sphere. Finally, Hegel endeavoured to understand nature as a mere stage of development of the spiritual life, as spiritual life which has not yet become conscious ; he thus wholly absorbed nature in the spiritual world. In all this we see an unceasing development of the subject, accompanied, however, by an ever greater separation from the immediate impression of things. Side by side with the thinkers stood the poets. Resting upon the conviction that the core of nature is in its essence human, they sought to spiritualise nature from within, thus winning it back to the spiritual world, to secure the superiority of the spirit while avoiding the rigidity of philosophical speculation.

How much of what is really great and permanent was obtained as a result of these combined efforts cannot be estimated within

the scope of this essay. But it is undeniable that this achievement, with all its greatness, has not prevented the world of things asserting itself against the subject and the human soul, and increasingly threatening our inward independence. During the nineteenth century the problem became increasingly difficult; more especially by reason of the peculiar energy with which the complications of modern life pressed themselves upon our immediate experience and feeling. Remarkably enough it was human activity itself which, through its characteristic development in the course of this century, most severely endangered man's inner independence. The nineteenth century was in the first place a period of work; in work lay its greatness, in work its danger and limitation. It is in the nature of work to possess two sides: it proclaims man's strength, in that it teaches him to seize hold of the object, to dominate it, to use it for his purposes; it demonstrates his dependence in that it compels him unceasingly to adapt his activity to the nature of the object, to subordinate it to the necessity of the thing itself. Now the nineteenth century, far more than any earlier age, gave prominence to this objective aspect of work. For in giving civilisation a predominantly technical form it created gigantic complexes of work, which refused to subordinate themselves to the aims of mere individuals, which contained their own laws and necessities and unfolded their own impulses and energies—in all this exercising a compulsory power over man. From having been an independent being he became more and more a mere means and instrument of the great machine. We most clearly perceive this emancipation of work in the routine of the modern factory, which confines all human action to the machine and ultimately leaves man nothing to do but to mind the machine. But it appears in modern science, also, with its immense complexes and its ever-increasing differentiation, in the modern military system and in the modern methods of governmental administration. On every hand we have a widespread mechanism, on every hand the need for a strict subordination of the individual to this mechanism, a continuous systematisation of work. At the same time we perceive an increasing importance of the masses, and an increasing importance, too, of historical continuity. Not the

individual, but the historical and social life of the community, has now become the chief vehicle of civilisation. Along with all this, we have, what, compared with earlier ages, is an immeasurably expanded human capacity, a facile mastery of gigantic tasks, a new type of civilisation. But all this greatness has been dearly bought. It has been bought at the price of the decay of the human soul, of the oppression of the inner man and of the man as a whole. The realm of work, of man's own work, becomes, in its exclusiveness, the enemy of man and his inward life. From the standpoint of work, man is valued according to his achievement only, and the condition of his soul is a matter of complete indifference. His powers, too, become developed along increasingly narrow lines the more his work becomes differentiated; the development of great capacity in a particular direction is accompanied by the atrophy of other capacities. The more undeveloped man's soul remains, however, the more despiritualised his work necessarily becomes. The whole of life undergoes an inward mechanisation. The resistance that the modern movement endeavours to overcome and must overcome, has thus penetrated into the sphere of life itself, and here becomes immensely more dangerous than any attack from without.

As we know, this development does not fail to meet with countermovements. We are surrounded in a thousand forms by modern subjectivism, which withdraws itself from external things to the condition of the soul itself, the inward feeling, and makes the strengthening, the artistic elevation, and the enjoyment of this condition the chief content of life. A fresh and very justifiable side of reality here asserts itself, and the violence of the reaction will not come as a surprise to those who have adequately perceived the significance of the crisis brought about by the development of modern work. But all such recognition of the rights of the subject still leaves the question open as to whether a withdrawal to the spiritual condition of the subject makes the latter strong enough and broad enough to solve the world-wide task with which the modern world presents it, whether from this standpoint it can gain a superiority with regard to work, and whether the modern movement, when thus

developing in the direction of mere subjectivity, does not run the danger of inward disintegration.

Without doubt we are in the midst of an important crisis; we are faced with the necessity of significant changes and decisions. As we may see from the immediate aspect of things, modern life has developed an inward contradiction which cannot be overcome with the means offered by our immediate existence. The nineteenth century caused us fully to recognise this contradiction (which was contained in modern life from the very beginning), and thus made it absolutely impossible of acceptance. The subject has unfolded itself, but the resistance has developed itself to a still greater degree, and now threatens to grow entirely beyond the control of the former. If we do not succeed in meeting this increased resistance with an inward deepening, and in laying hold of cosmic relationships within the subject itself; if we do not succeed in broadening the subject from within so that it becomes a world, a universal spirituality, and thus gains superiority to the external world and its work, then we have failed, and we must regard the whole modern movement as a stupendous error. The modern man, therefore, is fighting for the right of his existence, for his spiritual self-preservation, when he struggles for such a deepening of his being and for such a deepening of civilisation. One must be blind indeed not to see that to-day a movement in this direction is in progress, that it is sweeping slowly yet perceptibly through all the civilised peoples, and that, in all the variegated forms, nay in all the contradictions of its modes of appearance, it reveals a common fundamental desire.

But we must not mistakenly imagine that the progress of this movement will be any too easy! No combination of given elements, no acuteness of reflection, no elevation of mood (even of a mood ennobled by æsthetic feeling), can really carry us forward by a single step; again and again we sink back under the weight of the contradictions and obstacles which were to have been overcome. The development of civilisation has shown severe conflicts and obscure abysses within human nature itself; and the spiritual life, the spiritual task, must be preserved at the cost of the greatest possible effort, not only against diffi-

culties from without, but against man himself. In man there is jumbled up the great and the little, the noble and the ignoble, nay the divine and the demoniacal; so that if we are not successful in elevating spiritual life above the human situation and securing its superiority over against the human, there disappears all hope of a happy development. There must take place a reversal of the first appearance of the world and of the immediate conduct of life; a new actuality of life must arise to meet our desire, to open up to man new relationships, to make of him something new and better, to give a hold to spiritual life—then alone can inward feeling grow to an inner world, and then alone can the subject, as the point at which a new reality springs into being, become the point of departure of a new civilisation. If, on the other hand, the subject has not behind it the elevating power of a real world, then all effort on our part to build up a world is futile.

It is obvious that the foregoing argument is leading us into the realm of religion. For the central fact of the latter is nothing other than the opening up of a reality superior to the world, the revelation of a new life-process in the midst of our own life, an inner reversal of the world. When thus isolated from its relationships, this endeavour may appear overbold; but are we to dismiss from the very beginning, as impossible and foolish, that upon which depends the sole possibility of the preservation of our spiritual existence?

At any rate, this being the situation, we cannot be intimidated by objections which themselves belong to those very tendencies beyond which mankind is being irresistibly driven. The modern realist and positivist rejects religion for the reason that man is not permitted to penetrate beyond nature and through nature to a realm of "the beyond" and to open up its content. In this case religion is obviously looked upon as a kind of *Weltanschauung*, as a knowledge of that which lies beyond the realm of experience; while scientific investigation is regarded as the only possible pathway to knowledge. The inward contradiction by which religion is looked upon as a knowledge of the unknowable is so glaringly obvious that one may be excused for asking the question: How could it be supposed to have

escaped the notice of so many persons not altogether devoid of understanding? We may apply to religion, however, as well as to philosophy, Schelling's complaint, "that the most ordinary men have always been able to refute the greatest philosophers with things comprehensible even to children." "No one takes the trouble to think that perhaps they understood all that, too; for otherwise how could they have swum against the stream of evidence?"

The centre of the matter is that religion, at the height of its creative activity and in a healthy condition of development, makes no claim to give a learned explanation of cosmic mysteries. What it does desire is the actual revelation and appropriation of a new life-process, which, while it remains superior to the world, becomes at the same time the object of direct experience: its aim is the building-up of a new fundamental relationship towards reality. It is true that this actuality could not be of a spiritual nature unless there was contained in it a groundwork of conviction, but this groundwork must always first of all be developed; and that which develops from it is important, not on account of its own dogmatic content, but as the expression and witness of this life-process. Thus, in reality, this attack from the positive standpoint does not touch true religion.

The most modern form of subjectivity takes exception to religion, because it looks upon it as a diminution of life-energy, as a means for the weakening and degradation of man. It is alleged that religion causes weaklings to subordinate themselves to an alien order, to rely upon help from outside, to complain of sorrow and suffering, to reduce themselves to a condition of inactive sympathy, instead of drawing upon their own power and with it defying all resistance. There is certainly much in the history of religion which may well lend colour to such a view as this. But if we examine the original creative sources and the commanding summits of religious life, so far from perceiving this weakness, we become aware of a great strength of feeling, the expression not of a slavish, but of a manly, nay a heroic mode of thought. For although all religion involves a negation, a breach with the immediate reality (for how otherwise

could there be an impulse to rise above this ?), yet, like all energetic negations, it contains within itself a hidden affirmation; and it is, in the first place, a mode of approach to a new type of positivity. Religion did not idly abandon the immediate condition of things, the "world," as it is termed, but in opposition to it, sought to attain, through upward effort, a new world, a kingdom of God, to draw from this endless power; and, with this power, to overcome, to convert and to elevate the immediate world. And can we suppose that such a revolution could take place without the putting forth of gigantic power? Or have we become so dominated by the naturalistic system of values that we are no longer able to regard power directed towards within as power at all? In reality it is necessary only to submit ourselves, with open minds, to the impression produced by the great religious heroes, in order to realise that the reduction of religion to an expression of human weakness is an amazing error. Moreover, even the most superficial examination of the history of humanity should teach us that an interest in eternal things has more than anything else given rise to violent movement, burning enthusiasm and fiery passion, that nothing in the world has exerted a power so overwhelming, so captivating as that due to the idea of another world.

Therefore let us not permit our appreciation of the real meaning of religion to be checked by any perversions which may cling to it. Let us not allow our judgment to be determined by degenerate manifestations of the thing, rather than by the thing itself. And let us take care, in the case of a problem which is concerned with such earnest matters and involves the meaning and value of our own life, not to make use of cheap wit or stale sarcasm. It may happen only too easily that things may so develop as to correct us in a fashion that is far from gentle. For let us not be deceived: humanity is now experiencing a strong feeling of dissatisfaction with the civilisation of the modern world; we feel that this civilisation is not deeply rooted in our being, we are conscious that it fails to give a meaning and a content to life, and to fill men's minds with that great love which

raises them above narrowness and necessity. Man demands a value for his life and a significance for his action, and to strive against their destruction is something more than an egotistic desire for happiness; behind such strife there is a metaphysical life-impulse, a witness of the greater mysteries and depths of reality. And when this life-impulse succeeds at last in urging its way upwards, with full power and clearness, through the present decay and neglect, its elemental force will overthrow everything which stands in its way, and confidently and irresistibly clear a way for itself. Therefore those who are called to the guidance of the spiritual things of humanity, and more especially those who follow this calling in the spirit of freedom, must beware of taking the problem of religion too lightly ; never under any circumstances can they stop its development, but it will be easy enough for them to wreck their lives upon it. The modern movement can become equal to the immense obstacles by which it is confronted only if it succeeds in incorporating the religious desire : with the aid of this element, but not without it, or in opposition to it, can it attain that deepening of civilisation, that movement towards what is truly essential and truly human, upon which all hope of a happy future depends. In what fashion religion is to be conceived of in detail and upon what ground it is to be based, forms no part of this discussion ; at the present moment we are concerned only to maintain that it must be recognised as an important and essential problem, and that the matter must not be handed over for decision to that cheap cleverness, that blasé and facile negation, which thinks itself so great and is yet so empty. It is a gross error to believe that the development of civilisation makes religion superfluous. On the contrary, the more the life-process becomes deepened, the more claims it thereby makes and must make, which contradict the immediate world, the greater becomes the tension, and the more hopeless the outlook, if the growth of negation is not followed by a growth of affirmation, if an opening-up of essential relationships, an introduction of broader forces is not possible, if ultimately, in spite of all resistance, misrepresentation, and perversion, an

eternal affirmation does not assert itself, upon which all opposition must come to grief. And religion is the representative of this eternal affirmation.

Up to the present we have been occupied with the contemplation of religion from the standpoint of civilisation. But a question in the opposite sense is also possible: Is civilisation, and modern civilisation in particular, valuable or even necessary for religion itself? In this case, too, deeply rooted prejudices block the way. It is well-known that, in religious circles, civilisation is often rejected root and branch. Recently we have read in the papers that at the last Lutheran Evangelical Congress in Lund, a prominent speaker asserted that the two enemies of the Lutheran Church were "Rome" and "Modern Civilisation." If this news is true it must be described as lamentable, and it would be still more lamentable should such a view find any wide acceptance. It would be particularly regrettable from the standpoint of religion itself. Hegel did well to warn us against this kind of retail religion, which takes pleasure in perceiving evidences of a higher power in the personal affairs of the most insignificant individual, but delivers over to whim, chance, and irrational fate, the whole history of humanity and the entire development of human culture. Does it not reveal a petty form of faith, nay, a disbelief in the power of the Divine in the living present, to conceive of the deep developments of reality which this civilisation has effected as having taken place in direct opposition to the highest aim, and for this reason utterly to reject it? It is true that religion cannot uncritically accept civilisation; it must distinguish, in its content, between the true and the false, the eternal and the temporary, spiritual substance and human opinion; it would be guilty of complete self-abandonment should it withdraw from this task, and allow itself to drift defenceless hither and thither upon the surface of civilisation. To make distinctions of this sort within civilisation and within a particular type of civilisation, is a very different thing, however, from an absolute rejection of civilisation itself. A positive relationship towards civilisation, even in its modern form, is in the

highest degree necessary in the interests of religion itself. Religion cannot represent a new life-process superior to the world without recognising therein, in the first place, a demonstration of divine life, and maintaining this as an eternal truth, indestructible in the face of all changing human circumstances and of the whole flux of time. But religion has not only a divine, it has also a human side. It cannot fully develop the promised life without an act of appropriation on the part of man, without a calling-forth of human activity. It will not be able to reach its goal, in this direction, unless its construction, its existential form, follows the general development of humanity, unless it corresponds with the world-historical stage of spiritual evolution. The eternal needs to be gained ever anew; it will never fully convince any given age, if it speaks to it in the language of another. In as far as the developments of civilisation enhance the life-process, their advance must finally be for the benefit of religion, since they make it deeper, more effective and more penetrating.

It is undeniable that there is a possibility, nay a probability, of painful tension and severe upheavals. The development of history brings not only little disarrangements, but also great transformations; and it is almost unavoidable that a demand on their part for a renovation of the form of religion will be liable to be interpreted as an endangerment of its substance, as an abandonment of its being, and thus interpreted not only by the enemies, but also by the friends of religion. But however great may be the obstacles and delays which may thus result, no error or confusion on the part of man can ultimately prevail against the truth of the matter. If we are not to surrender to a crass dualism, we must cling to the hope, the conviction, the certainty, that what, from the standpoint of human inclination, seems hostile, will, in spite of all doubt and conflict, ultimately prove to be in its deepest essence progressive.

This applies in a peculiar degree to the relationship between true religion and modern civilisation. The great changes which have taken place since the fixation of the ecclesiastical form of Christianity have been brought by the latter into clear

consciousness and enabled to exert their full influence. In the general spiritual type we cannot fail to recognise an important alteration. That fixation took place under powerful influences derived from Greek intellectualism, which regarded thought and knowledge as the centre of spiritual life. The body of dogma (in itself a remarkable achievement) which was fixed under these influences, gives us much more, and also much less, than is necessary for religion. It cannot, therefore, be accepted as the final form of Christian truth. If, however, the breach with intellectualism renders necessary a thoroughgoing revision of this thought-world, in the sense that the centre of the matter comes into clear prominence and relieves our consciousness of the confusing influence of secondary things, is that to be looked upon as mere loss? Still deeper than this goes another question. The ancient construction of belief took place in a time of cultural stagnation and spiritual fatigue; the effect upon religion was the dominance of passivity, a prominent development of the yearning for peace and restfulness, an uncriticising desire for subordination and devotional reverence. Such a condition of religion is no longer suitable for an age aroused to activity and concerned with the development of every power. Shall the one age make a surrender of itself to the other, shall we be untrue to ourselves in order to avoid slighting the past? And is not this greater activity, which involves, even for the inner development of the thought-world, so much liberation and spiritualisation, something gained for religion, too?

When the matter is thus regarded, a new light is thrown upon the great changes which modern civilisation has effected in the more detailed working-out of reality, changes which cannot be ignored by a living religion. We note, in the first place, the immeasurable expansion of our conception of nature, together with the recognition of a thoroughgoing lawfulness in the whole of infinity; and in the second place the development of our technical power over nature, with an accompanying elevation of the human consciousness of power. We are conscious, further, of the increased importance of our historical and social common life, and in particular of our economic tasks;

and we recognise as peculiarly important the increasing separation of spiritual work from the immediate nature and situation of man, the undertaking of a struggle on the part of man against what is pettily human in his own being, and in the form taken by his conditions. All these factors cause us to feel the older form of Christianity as too narrow, too little, too anthropomorphic. And such a feeling once having been aroused, no earthly power can cause man to continue to revere as divine that which he feels to be anthropomorphic and mythological. Another distinction between the divine and the human, the eternal and the temporal, has thus become unavoidable. But is this all so much negation? Can we not wrest from it an affirmation; from the apparent loss may there not arise a real gain? This will certainly not be accomplished without work and struggle, without dangers and mistakes; but he who is afraid of these should not meddle with such things; he should continue to walk along the pathways of the past. He, however, who is in the grip of the inner necessity of the thing itself and subject to its impulse, will receive from thence courage and confidence. This inner necessity will lead him through the trial furnace of doubt, and for him the overcoming of anthropomorphism will signify a victory of the divine. Such a man will hail as a blessing for religion itself the magnificent liberation, broadening, and deepening of life which modern civilisation has effected and is still effecting. Even if the entrance upon this new life becomes more difficult for man and demands from him more self-denial, yet the life-process itself has become greater. And this gain is of greater significance than our comfort.

We advocate a mutual understanding between religion and civilisation, and we believe that this is as essential to the vivification of the former as to the deepening of the latter. This must not be taken to mean that the one should subordinate itself to the other and become its servant; on the contrary, greatness can here arise only from complete freedom, and therefore each requires full independence, if it is to develop its power, its truth, and its own specific character. It makes

an immense difference, however, whether the movements are finally in opposition to one another, or whether they are regarded as being complementary to one another within an all-including life-process, even as opposite poles and in a state of unceasing tension. Do they seek one another or do they fly from one another? There is to-day no necessity to defend the independence of civilisation. That religion, too, however, has its own roots and its own necessity has been forced upon our attention in a most unmistakable fashion by the immediate experiences of the nineteenth century. Considered from the point of view of civilisation, this whole century may be looked upon as a continuous reaction against the traditional form of religion, nay, against religion itself. Now, for the first time, the scientific transformation of our conception of the world acquired full power of conviction, and now, for the first time, it permeated the masses. Contemporaneously, the modern theory of evolution provided a new handle with which to subordinate man and his whole being and action to nature. Further, the historical method of study, with its relativity, came for the first time to full development and proved an irreconcilable enemy of the idea of eternal truth. The political, national, and social tasks immeasurably increased the importance of our immediate existence, excited the strongest passions and absorbed men's feelings and aspirations. Moreover the proper supports of religion seemed to have become insecure; historical criticism undermined the certainty of the sacred tradition and destroyed the miraculous glamour, with which, in the conviction of earlier generations, this tradition had been surrounded; while philosophy, through its metamorphosis into the rational and humanistic, brought about a softening and disintegration of the historical element. On every hand the miraculous was driven out of life to make way for a natural view of things. The combination of so many factors working in the same direction would cause us to suppose that religion would disappear more and more from the reality of our life, that its realm would vanish more and more into mere illusion. But does this correspond with the real state of affairs; is the power of religion, in actuality, far less at the beginning of

the twentieth century than it was at the beginning of the nineteenth? We know that the exact opposite is the case. In the midst of all attacks, of all apparent disintegration, of all demonstrations of its impossibility, absurdity and sterility, religion has arisen anew with power in the hearts of men. More than anything else, it dominates their interests, it inflames their passions, it unites and divides in love and hate; and in all this it exhibits a living, indestructible energy. In the year 1768, Winckelmann, writing from Rome, asserted that perhaps in fifty years there would remain neither a pope nor a priest in that city; is there to-day a single man who would venture to make the same statement? Such a revivification of religion, in direct opposition to the general movement of civilisation, is indeed a clear indication that religion draws its strength from sources peculiar to itself.

But with all this independence there need be no hostile division between religion and civilisation. Each, as we have seen, needs the other in order to complete its own work. Thus the relationship of the characteristic, modern type of life to religion, with which we began our study, now takes on a different complexion: the modern movements themselves can progress happily, and from mere oppositional movements become the leading forces of the spiritual life, only if they absorb within themselves the religious element, thereby becoming deeper and stronger. Modern life desires a powerful grasp of the immediate moment; it wishes to shape and to create from the standpoint of the immediate present. But what is the moment, if it is not a "representative of eternity"; and how can he who drifts hither and thither without a compass on the waves of time, hope to discover a true and spiritually inspired present? We wish to secure a powerful and clear development of individuality; but what is individuality and what value has it, if it be not founded in a spiritual world and be not capable, from this basis, of appropriating the breadth and truth of the things themselves? We rejoice in our positive life-feeling and strive towards a final affirmation; but we must not forget that for men like ourselves, in the midst of growth and conflict, the way to a true and significant affirmation must be through a negation, that without

an inner renewal this affirmation of life signifies a relapse from spirituality, a subjection to crude nature. Remember, therefore, so we should cry to our contemporaries, that your task is a great one; you will then think of religion otherwise than you are now accustomed to think. Those who conceive of the situation in this fashion must indeed look upon the present as an age full of difficult complications and charged with unsolved tasks. But this need be no cause for despondency. Why should we not, with Fichte, "rejoice at the sight of that vast field which we are called to cultivate," and "rejoice that we feel strength within us, and that our task is endless"?

IN DEFENCE OF MORALITY

IV

IN DEFENCE OF MORALITY*

I

A STRONG current of opposition to morality runs through the literature of the present day. There are large sections of society in which morality enjoys a reputation that is far from favourable. We are frequently told that it harnesses men and women with a hard yoke, robs their actions of freshness and power, and sacrifices personal feeling to conventional ordinances, the living present to inert custom. And often as we hear this, we are made even more conscious of it by the innumerable works of art which represent the supporters of morality as bloodless, spiritless, pedantic and phlegmatic persons, while hailing, as noble and free men and women, those who boldly cast off every bond to follow the sole impulse of undisciplined nature. As compared with the former state of affairs, the situation has been completely reversed: whereas man was once held responsible before the bar of morality, now it is morality which has to justify itself before man—the one-time judge now stands in the dock.

The procedure adopted by the defenders of morality is frequently the reverse of skilful. They are apt to be contented with an assertion of its incomparable elevation, while those who dispute it are accused of unconscientious action. Their own indignation is reckoned as a convincing refutation. But is it not clear that, in this way, they are moving in a circle? For the very system of values which is in dispute is treated as accepted; and the point of conflict is held to be decided in

* From the *Deutsche Rundschau*, XXV.; No. 6 (March, 1899).

advance of all discussion. Their subjective feeling may be as strong and as honourable as possible, but it does not constitute a fit weapon for spiritual conflict. Moreover, it would be a very remarkable thing if attacks which depend for their support, not so much upon isolated individuals as upon broad tendencies of the age, did not point to some inner complications in the matter itself. Perhaps morality contains more problems and is less a matter-of-course than current opinion reckons (or at any rate reckoned) to be the case.

The experience of history tends to confirm this suggestion. For movements against morality have appeared with considerable frequency, nay, with a certain regularity. Whenever man has felt the traditional order to be no longer inwardly binding, and has made his own opinion and his own comfort the measure of all things, there has grown up a sophistry, rejecting everything good-in-itself and every norm, as empty illusion and an injurious burdening of life; and whenever man became divided from his own work, and sought refuge in his isolated feeling, there came into being a romanticism, which, glorifying the amusement and egoistic enjoyment of the "genius," looked upon morality, with its hard work and its care for the whole, as plebeian and philistine. The disciple of the æsthetic view of life frequently classes the good as a pedantic and morose stepbrother of the beautiful; and a headstrong consciousness of power, pressing forward to the development of every capacity, is apt to feel the principles of morality to be a tiresome hindrance. These tendencies are involved in all sorts of complications and cross-currents, determined by the temper and condition of the age in question.

If, accordingly, morality is an indication which is continually liable to opposition, its present unpopularity cannot be looked upon as anything inexplicable or monstrous. But before we venture to pass judgment upon the situation, let us attempt to understand it in reference to its relationships. Although the saying that to understand all is to forgive all, may deserve emphatic rejection, as an inducement to characterless conduct, yet without understanding there can be no just or final judgment.

In reality, the modern movement against morality derives its

impulse from problems and complications of a general character. The transformations of the last few centuries have deeply shaken the older conception and foundation of morality; and that which has been put forward as compensation for the loss is very far from having so consolidated itself and so entered into man's deeper self, as to provide a safe anchor in the storms of life.

Morality still has its strongest root in traditional religion; but who could deny that the retrogression and inner complication of religion in the modern world has made its influence upon morality weak and insecure? A further source of morality is to be found in humanistic culture, with its endeavour to secure a harmonious development of all human powers, and its belief in a Good and Beautiful in man, appealing to us from the days of antiquity and speaking through the mouths of our great German poets. But this culture is unavoidably confined to narrow circles; and it, and the whole of its thought-world, has even less hold than has religion upon the conviction of the present day. Finally, the manly doctrine of duty of Kant and Fichte is, it is true, not yet dead; but those who can understand such thinkers as these, are an even smaller body than those who are influenced by the great poets; and, moreover, the inner relationships, out of which this doctrine sprang, have, in spite of their interest to the learned, passed far beyond the field of vision of our contemporaries. And lacking these relationships, morality becomes a mere conglomeration of precepts; and the catechism can provide this better than philosophy can.

The age seeks to compensate morality for these heavy losses, by linking it up more closely with the work of human society. The development of moral feeling in the individual ceases to be the central aim, and its place is taken by the welfare and progress of the whole; man's work unceasingly directs him towards this whole, and to absorb its demands in his feeling, inwardly to recognise the actual bond, is held to be all that is necessary to obtain a new kind of morality, a "social ethic," apparently covering the whole wealth of experience. As a purely human production, free from all the com-

plications of religion and speculation, this morality based upon social work appears firmly to unite men, and to set up tangible goals for conduct. The core of morality, according to this type of thought, is found in the subordination of personal interests to those of society, in action for others, in "altruism" as contrasted with egoism. Such a conviction not only gives rise to corresponding philosophical systems; it pulsates in great waves through our entire life. The term "social" not only continually confronts us in connection with external things; it is claimed that it should also absorb our inner life.

In this direction, much that is great is and will be accomplished; and there can be no doubt that here lies the chief strength of our age. But this strength, however great the effort it puts forth, cannot succeed in making a conquest of the whole man and in satisfying his innermost desire. On the contrary, there develops, at the basis of life, that sharp division with which we dealt in detail, in this magazine, some little time ago;* namely the division between subject and object, feeling and work, which oppresses and rends in twain the man of to-day.

Work, both technical and practical, has more and more directed itself towards the things of the external world, and in the degree that it has become bound up in these outward things it has withdrawn itself from the inner life, nay it has become alienated from this life. Along with all the demands upon the powers of individuals and all the growth of technical achievements, work lays hold less and less of the man as a whole, it demands ever less of his feeling and conviction. Now, according to the teaching of the age itself, everything must languish and wither that is not kept in unceasing activity; our inner life thus seems inescapably destined to become more and more an empty, lifeless background, while the real man is manifestly becoming transformed into a machine, although an immensely complicated machine.

A reaction against this tendency is unavoidable. The

* *Der Innere Mensch am Ausgang des* 19 *Jahrhunderts* [*The Inner Man at the Close of the Nineteenth Century*], in the *Deutsche Rundschau*, 1897, vol. xxiii. p. 29.

human subject cannot quietly accept this depreciation; it will put forth every particle of capacity which it still possesses, in order to escape this stifling and destruction. In making such an effort, it flies from the whole routine of work and falls back upon itself; itself, that is, in its apparently isolated and self-sufficient mood; now it feels itself to be wholly in its own sphere, and superior to all outward influence; nay, now it thinks itself sufficiently sovereign to create new values, according to which it measures all action. If, at the same time, the individual human being takes precedence of society, if his inner state is placed before all visible achievement, if the pleasure of the immediate moment overrules all enduring norms, and if an aristocratic, and often perhaps crude and arrogant romanticism, classes all work performed for society as prosaic and soulless, there is produced a soil which must be unfavourable to a morality founded on social relationships. Action for others with whom no inner bond connects us, subordination to a society to which we are linked by physical necessity only, appears, not without cause, to involve a diminution of our own power, to constitute a submission to alien and merely conventional ordinances. The more man devotes himself to such action, the more his life seems to lose freshness, joy and truthfulness, the more he himself sinks to be merely one of the herd. And though this may be patiently endured, it is urged, by those whom nature has fitted for such a low level, men and women of a stronger stamp will shake off these bonds and trust their own star alone.

This may seem sufficiently smooth and clear. But in reality the matter is not so simple. The morality that is rejected on account of its narrowing and oppressive influence, is obviously a particular kind of morality, a morality which springs from the special position of the age and carries within itself all the accidental peculiarities of this position. Possibly one can be as critically disposed towards a merely social morality as are its neo-romantic and sophistical opponents, and at the same time hold in full honour a more general idea of morality. To-day possibly both sides are guilty of superficiality; those who

reduce morality to a mere order of social life, and those who, in the midst of their opposition to this view, reveal their association with it, thus exhibiting a dependence upon the very opponents against whom they struggle so hard. The real position of the matter cannot possibly be discussed, in principle, with such brevity, but even a rapid glance at history promises to be helpful. The book of history lies ready to our hand; therefore let us see what it teaches us with regard to the position and influence of morality in the life of humanity. For this purpose, it will be well to direct our attention towards the highest levels of spiritual creation; for here will come to clear characterisation, that which the uninspired routine of everyday life is apt to wear down and obscure. And we shall confine ourselves to the objection, which sounds the loudest in all complaints, that morality makes men weak, spiritless and dependent. We will call upon the great creative spirits to witness whether this is true, whether in reality our existence becomes depressed to littleness by morality, or whether, on the contrary, it is raised by it to true greatness. It will become clear, at the same time, whether morality and action for the common good prove to be identical.

II

Let us begin with Plato, as the first thinker who embraced the life and conduct of man in a great system. We find his estimate of morality not only in separate sayings, such as "All the gold upon the earth and beneath it is not to be set against virtue," but penetrating and dominating his whole system. The idea of the good is to him the highest of all ideas; moral conduct forms the core of life and is decisive with regard to the fate of humanity; and in the educational plan of his ideal state, the moral task occupies a position of such unconditional supremacy, that art suffers a severe injury. Did Plato on this account submit himself to human ordinances and thus permit his life to be narrowed? Precisely the opposite was the case. For his endeavour received its chief impulse from a clear perception of the transitory and empty nature of the common

fe of human society. This life exhibits an unceasing change f opinions and aspirations and therefore knows no fixed goals, o permanent goods; it is at the same time ruled by mere ppearance, by the desire to reckon as something with the thers; so that what is here called virtue and happiness, is n reality only an appearance of virtue and an appearance of appiness. Therefore every desire for a firm and essential ontent in our existence, all aspiration towards truthfulness, mpels towards a breach with the social conditions and towards he seeking of a new sphere of life. This Plato finds in the aying hold of the unchangeable forms and orders of the whole, hich science reveals to the eye of the spirit. Through a union ith them, there results a larger, purer life, charged with eternal ontent, and man at the same time receives the assurance of an ternity for his own being. Upon this soil alone, and at the and of science alone, can real virtue arise, a virtue which rests pon personal insight and free action, and is in this way sharply eparated from that product of mere natural impulse or social ustom, which is called virtue in ordinary life.

Assisted by the light of knowledge, man discovers in his soul ixed fundamental distinctions and a great task. Our soul em-races different stages; it shows lower and higher impulses. On he average level of life, man is ruled by the lower, by the sen-uous desires, and reason is driven far into the background. This, owever, is not in accordance with man's true nature and is the ource of an inner perversion, of a disharmony, which makes im weak and suffering, even in the midst of all the brilliance f outward successes. If, on the contrary, by reason of scientific nsight the natural relationship is established, the fruit of this s complete health and an inner harmony of man's whole being. n this way, man wins an unshakable support and a happiness hat cannot be compared to any sensuous well-being. In orking for this, the soul is not directed towards without, but ccupied wholly with itself and satisfied with itself. Man no onger asks himself whether he pleases other men and his nvironment, but whether he pleases himself and the Divinity. Now, when all depends upon real being and nothing upon ppearances, his happiness requires no alien recognition; nay,

when inner success is decisive of all, he becomes independent of external results, and at the same time of the power of fate. Thus Plato could draw his famous picture of the suffering just man, rejected of men, persecuted to the point of death, and at the same time branded to all appearances with the stigma of unrighteousness, yet whose inner elevation shines out all the more brightly for the great weight of his trials.

This picture of human life and conduct, possessed, in Plato's case, not only the brilliance and splendour of an artistic representation, but also the mark of complete personal truthfulness; for he himself, throughout the whole of his life-work, manfully preserved that inner independence which he looked upon as a main condition of true happiness. He could conceive no forceful conduct without a "noble" wrath; with noble wrath he himself branded the transitoriness and futility of the customary routine of human life with the mark of inferiority, and threw his whole power into the task of giving to life a new content rooted in essential being. Thus he was the first to build up a realm of concepts and there firmly to establish the goods of humanity; thus, too, without being disturbed by the sharpest conflict with traditional opinions and institutions, he set up a high ideal for human society, which, although incapable of being carried out just as he conceived it, proved a fruitful stimulus to the work of millenniums. In such a life-work there was no lack of inner struggle and suffering—this is shown with sufficient clearness by his writings—but as a whole it reveals with convincing clearness a great and rich personality, elevated, resting in himself, yet rejoicing thoroughly in action. Where, we may well ask, do we find the most power and the greatest capacity for work: in such a personality, inspired by the grandeur of morality, or in our modern neo-romantic or sophistical cavillers at morality?

For its complete scientific independence, morality is indebted to the Stoics; they were the first clearly to distinguish its task from all the other departments of life. Their endeavour to gain the whole man for morality, and to base his happiness entirely upon it, did not always escape the danger of paradoxical exaggeration and rhetorical pathos. But those who do not

allow these imperfections in detail to distort their feeling for the whole will recognise and value, in the moral work of the Stoics, an achievement of world-historical significance. The Stoics were the children of an age which provided man neither with the rich life of the old free state, nor with a great, spiritual, creative work, as a solid framework and safe guide; it therefore compelled the individual to seek support within himself. The Stoics sought to give him this inner strength through the revelation and development of a moral nature in man. They were not thinking, in this connection, of the production of a new order of things; for living in an age dominated and overawed by great vicissitudes, they looked upon the course of the world as unalterably fixed and man as subjected to its unbending decrees. But they believed themselves, nevertheless, to have discovered in man a point of inner freedom and superior greatness. Man is so situated, they declared, that he can either treat the course of the world as an alien and hostile fate, striving against it boldly but uselessly, and thus most deeply feeling his own feebleness; or he can place himself in harmony with it by recognising its reason and at the same time making it part of his own will. In this way the inevitable obedience becomes converted into a free action, the course of things loses its crushing rigidity, together with its alien character; man ceases to be a slave and becomes a lord of the things. In taking this new turn, the whole of life is raised to a positive level.

Free action, which is decisive with regard to the attitude towards the whole, is not, however, a detached work, an external thing. On the contrary, it is in this way that the whole of life is linked up to form a continuous action (*Handlung*) and supported by this action. There is thus developed a sphere of pure inwardness; concepts like *consciousness*, *conscience*, *duty*, now, for the first time, acquire a definite stamp; and inner feeling attains to a safe superiority as compared with all external achievement. Thus the whole of reality is converted into inner life, and, in perfecting this, man is ennobled as compared with all mere nature.

Thus outlined, the matter seems simple and smooth; but

in the experience of human psychic life it takes the form of a difficult problem. Man is raised above the irrationality of existence and taken up into the new life, only in as far as he succeeds in converting his whole soul into active thought, into unceasing thought-action (*Denkhandlung*), thus escaping all the impressions of the environment. As soon as he relaxes and permits softer sensations or excited feelings to enter his mind, he is a victim of the power of these impressions and loses his entire independence. He is then compelled to recognise the system of values which is involved in these states of feeling; he becomes the plaything of misfortune and chance. This false valuation, however, dominates the average level of life and the ordinary opinions of men; accordingly true strength and fitness is developed only through a breach with this and through complete indifference with regard to the judgment of the mass. Man must unceasingly struggle not only against others, but also against himself. For the deadly enemy of all genuine happiness, a passive attitude to the things, seeks to penetrate into his own soul, too: pleasure and pain, desire and fear, are always ready to subject the soul to their yoke and to make it disloyal to its task. Thus life becomes hard and harsh; it loses the renowned merriment of the antique world and becomes intolerant of all easygoing acquiescence. It was the Stoics who first compared life to a continual warfare ("To live is to struggle," Seneca).

But this conflict, such was their conviction, develops man's full powers; with its fortifying influence, it raises him into a heroic world and conveys to him a god-like greatness of soul. A character strengthened on these lines cannot be shaken by any stroke of fate—not even by the destruction of the world. In this way, in spite of every resistance, man can cling to his great task; in its service, he can raise himself above all that is little and petty, and "live as if upon a mountain peak" (Marcus Aurelius). The Stoics did not address themselves to particular and specially gifted individuals, but, relying upon the power of our common reason, they called upon all that bears the human countenance to attain to this greatness; the elevation, in this case, does not rest upon that which distin-

guishes one man from another, but upon that which raises man, as a moral being, above all mere nature.

Towards the end of the antique world, convictions of this kind served to build up firm and proud characters. They were a source of manly feeling, and a refuge for those who bravely withstood the increasing laxity and effeminacy of a super-refined civilisation. They continued, moreover, to be a source of power even after the lapse of many centuries; and they introduced an element of virility into the morality of the modern Enlightenment. We hear their echo in the energetic doctrine of duty of Kant and Fichte. And wherever they have been effective, an inner independence, an autonomy of man, has been linked with the moral bond.

Stoic morality penetrated, too, into ancient Christianity; the early centuries of the latter found the task of life and the true service of God in right moral conduct. But there was an essential change, in that men no longer closed their minds to the sensation of pain, but allowed the latter full weight. Men no longer rejected suffering but freely took it upon themselves. Morality accordingly assumed a gentler guise; the Stoic bravery became a steady perseverance, and their self-conscious conduct developed into a willing endurance. This occurred all the more as men became more closely united and the suffering of one became the pain of another. It would, however, be utterly false to attribute to the early Christians a dejected and stunted being, dull passivity, and inner spiritlessness. For they did not seek to suspend their wills in mere submission to suffering, but inwardly to overcome it; through love and faith suffering actually became to them a source of strength. "This distinguishes us from the others who know not God, that they complain and grumble when in misfortune, while misfortune does not detach us from the truth of virtue, but lets us grow stronger through pain" (Cyprian). A cheerful mood, freed from all sadness, is demanded. Men think highly of themselves, as called to union with God; and oppose a pessimism holding all human action to be futile and valueless. Here, too, there is developed a world of heroism, although of a kind different from that previously known. Without heroic

feeling, indeed, how could ancient Christianity have found the power to work its way up in the face of all the might (inward and outward) of the ancient world, to plant the seed of a new spiritual order, and to draw the whole future development of humanity into its channels?

The Reformation constitutes the greatest period within Christianity; it acquired its immeasurable power over men's minds, not by reason of any dogmatic formula, but through the fire of a moral movement, which, pioneered by the strong development of the subject in the modern world, and fanned by many contemporary abuses, finally blazed up with a bright flame in certain great personalities, and especially in that of Luther. "He was in the grip of an all-powerful impulse—his concern for eternal salvation. This became the life in his life and enabled him to put forth all his strength; this gave him the power and the gifts which were the admiration of those who came after him" (Fichte). The new movement was the source of a greater earnestness in human life; it enhanced the consciousness of personal responsibility; it deepened the concept of moral personality; and moreover (which is the surest mark of a really great movement) this occurred not only in the case of those who agreed with Luther, but also in the case of those who opposed him.

Can it be said that such transformations made life more dependent, more timid, more dejected? Let us consider Luther himself. It was undoubtedly his lot to experience the most severe upheavals, and while passing through these he felt weak and helpless. But in these struggles and cares his life is so entirely concentrated upon his own inner existence and so fully occupied with himself that it acquires a safe superiority to all social environment and becomes inaccessible to any considerations of mere expediency. Now he could say: *Aergernis hin, Aergernis her, Not bricht Eisen und hat kein Aergernis. Ich soll der schwachen Gewissen schonen, sofern es ohne Gefahr meiner Seele geschehen mag. Wo nicht, so soll ich meiner Seele raten, es aergere sich denn die ganze oder halbe Welt.* And Luther does not continue to remain in conflict; he finds that all his cares and needs are overcome through belief in a grace

which saves quite apart from all personal merit. And with this, the intolerable pressure is transformed into an unlimited freedom, and the heavy anxiety that weighed upon his heart is transmuted into an overwhelming joy. Tradition and authority, outward formulæ and holy works all grow pale before the great transformation of the inner man, moving the very centre of personality. In the newly revealed life man feels himself compelled, through love, unceasingly to serve his neighbour, nay, to make himself the willing slave of the others; yet at the same time he feels himself, in the inwardness of his faith, to be the free lord and king of all things, to be subject to no one. In this way obedience itself acquires the character of joy and freedom, and it can be said, in tones of rejoicing: "Out of faith there flows love and joy in the Lord, and out of love a willing, joyous and free spirit to serve our neighbour with a free will, without any regard for thanks or unthanks, for praise or blame, for gain or loss." This agrees very ill with that representation of man as enslaved by morality, that is promulgated by its present-day critics.

Coming to modern times, Kant, in particular, forms a new epoch for morality. Not only does his system find its fixed centre in the idea of a moral law; his personal feeling, too, is full of the incomparable grandeur of this idea: "All good that is not founded upon right moral feeling, is no more than an outward appearance, a veneered wretchedness." "If justice be defeated it is no longer worth while for man's life on this earth to continue."

We can therefore understand why Kant is attacked with peculiar sharpness by the critics of morality. He is accused of having made man the slave of a rigid law; nay, of having refused to base conduct upon mere inclination—virtue derived from mere inclination was regarded by him as glittering wretchedness—and this is interpreted as a denial of all inner joy in the good, and as an attempt to make man the soulless instrument of an abstract principle. What a contemptible misunderstanding of the great thinker's intention! It is true that Kant subjected all conduct to a strict law, but this law is not laid upon man from without by an alien will; it springs

from man's innermost being, it arises in his own action and therewith reveals a wholly new order of things. Man's moral being rests precisely upon this: in conduct he is subordinate solely to his own law-giving; through such an autonomy he attains a liberation from all the mechanism of nature and acquires a dignity which raises him beyond all animalism, makes him a personality, and gives him part in an absolute reason. When man is thus elevated and a new world is revealed to him, the moral law can become to the thinker an object of sincere reverence. As in Kant's famous saying, that two things filled him with ever-increasing admiration and reverence: the starry heaven above him and the moral law within him.

Whether Kant rightly formulated the relationship between duty and inclination, is open to doubt. In the face of a eudemonistic effeminacy in the life of his age, he endeavoured to place conduct upon a firmer basis than the transitory and accidental character of natural inclination. And this undeniably gave to the execution of his thoughts a certain harshness. But this harshness must not cause us to forget, even for a moment, how greatly Kant desired to enlist for duty the living feeling of the whole man, and what a warmth the idea of duty inspired in himself. We do not go beyond the mark in saying that nowhere in the wide circle of his thought-world does he become so inwardly moved and express himself with so much enthusiasm as when he comes to talk of duty: "Duty! thou great and lofty word; thou who takest to thy heart nothing in the name of favour or flattery, but demandest submission—where is a source worthy of thee, and where shall men look for the root of thy noble origin?"

Fundamentally false, therefore, is the idea that Kant demanded an inner indifference in the name of dutiful conduct or even approved a sullen mood, as if recognising no inner satisfaction and joy. He expressly says: "The rules of practice in virtue terminate in these two states of feeling, *animus strenuus et hilaris*; to be thorough and cheerful in the performance of duty. That which one does in obedience to duty, merely as a compulsory service and without pleasure, has no inner value."

Historical experience, too, confirms the statement that Kant did not work towards the enslaving of the spirit, but towards its liberation. A strong, manly feeling is traceable to his influence, a feeling which produced disciples strong in action (like Fichte), and contributed powerfully towards the re-construction of the Prussian State and the moral strengthening of German life in general. Through all the movements of the centuries down to the present day this feeling has formed a barrier against softening and superficialising influences.

III

Thus, in the case of the moral idea, we perceive a chain of creation and active influence running right through the whole of history. At the very least, it is evident that morality need not be looked upon as a weakness; and that it is not the fault of morality but of the ages and of individuals when it has become such. At the highest points it is clearly revealed as a power, not for degradation, but for elevation, not for oppression, but for liberation; nay, its whole development exhibits itself as a struggle for a spiritual self-dependence, for man's inner independence. This movement is governed by the conviction that such independence is not an inheritance derived from mere nature, which can be appropriated without effort. On the contrary, the greatness is to be won with labour and difficulty; it is not gained without sacrifice and self-denial, without hard service and willing obedience. But as the obedience itself does not spring from blind compulsion, but from free direction, through it man gains a world of freedom and a superiority over all outward pressure. At the same time, in participating in infinity, he wins a wider and purer self. As a merely natural being, man is an almost invisible fragment of the immeasurable cosmos, dependent, through and through, upon its processes, to the centre of his being a will-less product of its necessity. It is the invisible order, which he lays hold of as a moral and spiritual being, which first renders possible to him a self-active co-operation, and at the same time an independence of everything external. It is in the union with inner

relationships that he first receives the power to base himself upon his own personality, and if it must be, to resist the whole world.

We perceive, accordingly, that the master-minds have not permitted the moral idea to suffer from any lack of courage, strength and independence. Where then is the greatest true power: in our modern Romanticists with their expansive emotions and their self-persuasion of a great power, or in such heroes as we have considered, men like Plato, Luther, and Kant, who were far too conscious of the difficulty of their task to be boastfully aware of any superfluity of power, but whose true strength was proved by a great life-work? And these heroes, along with a common and immeasurably deep reverence for invisible laws, exhibit at the same time such an energetic development of individual character as completely to refute the objection that morality must produce men mechanically shaped after a pattern. At any rate we cannot feel hurt by being reckoned as pattern men, if we are in the company of Plato, Luther and Kant!

At the same time, it becomes clear that, considered from the standpoint of such men, morality means a great deal more than action for the welfare of society, that in the first place it is a matter of the man himself, a compelling problem of his own being, a desire to overcome an unbearable inward schism and at the same time to establish a new basic relationship to reality. From such an inner necessity alone can there proceed an overpowering impulse and a joyful assurance of victory, this alone can give rise to the certainty of success in what seems incomprehensible, nay impossible. That the direction of morality towards society, in recent times, and especially in our own age, has brought with it a wealth of fruitful impulses can be at the same time fully recognised. But to place the ultimate basis of morality in the relationship to the social environment, is to deduce man's innermost being from without, to rob morality itself of its soul, and to let it dwindle into such a caricature that it necessarily provokes opposition, and gives the opponents of morality, in spite of their superficiality, an appearance of being in the right.

If we bear in mind the nature of genuine morality, as testified

by the world-historical work, these attacks may with impunity be left on one side; they do not touch the centre of the matter in the very least. But although having so little significance in their own substance, they remain noteworthy as a symptom of difficult complications, as a sign of the insecure position of morality in present-day life as a whole. History shows that the moral idea has ever afresh climbed to lofty summits; but it likewise shows that in between these periods of elevation there have been times of severe depression, and that each time the upward way has cost hard labour. It is obvious that in the case of a work of the purest inwardness, one age cannot work for another, one age cannot rest upon another. On the contrary, the matter remains all the while in a plastic state; ever afresh, morality must develop and demonstrate its truth, with original, spontaneous power; ever afresh it must demand the living decision, not only of the individual but also of the community. Present-day civilisation, however, in spite of all its great achievements, has no inner solidarity of conviction, no thought-world which embraces the human soul, no dominating ideal of life. Accordingly, it cannot ground morality in the core of our being, nor give it a form corresponding to our stage of world-historical development and work.

We are face to face, at this point, with great tasks and difficult problems. For the time being, the broad current of the age, indifferent and callous, thrusts them aside. But their time will come, and it draws nearer in proportion as the individual begins to be personally sensitive to the emptiness of a civilisation without a soul, and as men become clearly conscious of the disproportion between the feverish intensity of modern work and its yield of happiness and spiritual life. Times of lax and superficial morality have always been followed by periods of deepening and strengthening. And thus it will be in the future, as certainly as there rules in man's being a nature that cannot be destroyed, a nature that ever anew breaks victoriously forth through all the changes which time can bring.

THE MORAL FORCES IN THE LIFE OF TO-DAY

V

THE MORAL FORCES IN THE LIFE OF TO-DAY*

In dealing with moral problems, we must distinguish between these two things: the ultimate derivation of morality from our innermost nature, and from our basic relationship to the whole, on the one hand; and its actual unfoldment, its rise and growth within the human sphere, on the other. Those who think themselves able to dispense with the former, condemn their own mode of thought to irrevocable superficiality; those who neglect the latter, renounce the power of morality within human conditions, and the gaining of the whole man. A conclusive treatment must embrace both. But without injury now the one side and now the other may come more to the front. The following study will pursue the second of these two lines of thought.

A consideration of this kind is based upon the conviction that man—empirically regarded—is not already moral, but must first become so; and this he cannot do unless the life-process itself so shapes him; experience and work must effect a moral education, a force indwelling in life must lead the individuals beyond their crude natural impulses and their narrow care for personal welfare. The chief means of education consists in that which at first comes to us through the compulsion of outward circumstances, being gradually turned into inner life and appropriated by our feeling; that which at first operates only here and there, only under particular circumstances and conditions, gradually ceases to be accidental and is extended

* From the *Zukunft*, vii., No. 10 (December 10, 1898).

over the whole of life. To follow out this movement in a given age means to trace the lines of convergence and points of contact which empirical life offers to the work of moral development; it means to seek out the place of morality in the work of the age. And we must adopt this method of procedure in dealing with the moral forces of the present day.

An energetic negation is the primary characteristic of modern life, if we consider it, as we do in this case, in its characteristic manifestation only: it rejects all invisible relationships and supernatural laws. This signifies a thrusting aside of religion and a weakening of its moral impulses. Now the immediate moral effect of religion is certainly often overrated. That which, in the first place, impels men towards religion is, for the most part, nothing other than care for their own happiness, and even within the sphere of religion there is so much envy and hatred, so much selfishness and passion, that under human circumstances, the power of religion does not straightway signify a gain for morality. But only a short-sighted consideration could fail to recognise that, in spite of all this, powerful moral influences go forth from religion. The invisible goods, the acquisition of which was prompted in the first place perhaps by selfish motives only, begin, through their own value, to please and to move the feelings; the mere fact of an occupation with high and distant things, effects an elevation above the petty interests and cares of everyday life; the ideas of eternity and infinity lay hold of men's minds and deeply stir them; supernatural laws, placed by faith in a living present, operate towards the recognition of the limits of everything human, and towards the awakening of reverence and piety. And since, when religion is in a position of secure dominance, this extends over the whole of man's soul, there results a characteristic type of morality, a constant counteraction of the lower and meaner elements in human nature. In so far, an upheaval of religion is at the same time a loss for morality. And who can deny that religion has been severely shaken in the modern era?

Modern life believes itself able entirely and easily to replace the deficiency which thus results by a more energetic grasp of immediate reality and a full employment of the otherwise

neglected forces here at hand. Such a movement as this, in the first place opens up an endless manifoldness, but a more accurate examination reveals guiding aims and centres of unity in the midst of all the disintegration. Such a unity is to-day above all the *social idea*, the endeavour to raise the whole of humanity, in all its individual members, to a higher stage of well-being, to destroy necessity and misery at their very deepest roots (not merely to alleviate them here and there), to communicate the goods of a highly developed civilisation, not to special classes only, but to everyone bearing the human countenance. It is this goal, in particular, which imparts determination and concentration to the life of the present day. From this standpoint certain truths appear to be matters-of-course and binding upon all. At this point all are drawn together into a great stream. Our age, moreover, acquires a specific moral stamp and characteristic moral forces in that it finds the centre of gravity of its spiritual existence, not like earlier ages, in religion, nor in the building up of the inner man, but in social work.

At this point the consciousness of the solidarity of humanity is aroused, the individual becomes more keenly sensitive to his responsibility for the condition of society as a whole; the need and suffering of the one are more directly felt in sympathy by the others, and from feeling, there is an impulse of previously unknown energy towards vigorous action, towards an untiring working for others and for the whole. An essential feature of this movement is that the social activity is not looked upon as a matter of favour or pity, as an outpouring of mere goodwill, but as a duty on the one hand and a right on the other; this is the point at which the idea of duty (otherwise often but little regarded) approaches the modern man and profoundly stirs him. To recognise a right on the part of another, means to place oneself in his position and to limit one's own desires. Feelings of this kind are to-day finding their way into political life and into the statute-book. The moral influence of art, literature and philosophy also lies in the social direction. The change, as compared with earlier ages, is obvious. Formerly the poets were looked upon as the teachers and creators of

humanity, and their function was to elevate the level of human existence through the presentation of lofty ideals; now, they seek, through the clearness and realism of their art, to bring us nearer to reality, to impart to their impressions a greater power of arousing feeling, and to stir us to sympathy by a bold unveiling of the darker side of human existence. Formerly, philosophy advanced the moral development of man, either by insisting, with Plato, upon a high mode of thought, averse to all that is common and degrading, or by calling man, after the fashion of the Stoics, to inner independence and a manly consciousness of duty; to-day it operates, in so far as it operates at all, towards the strengthening of solidarity, and as an impulse to social work.

Thus the social tendency imparts an altogether peculiar character to modern morality. We cannot fail to recognise that it causes morality to become energetic, to direct itself towards tangible achievement, to be moved by the destiny of the whole, and to embrace the whole sphere of life; there is a desire to convert ethics in general into social ethics, without adequately inquiring whether in this way we are not employing a shallow and perverted concept. In general it may be said that the obvious advantages of the new type are apt to lead us to forget its limits and its dangers. Our interest is often wholly absorbed by the outer situation; our entire salvation seems to depend upon its betterment; its thorough transformation is to produce happy and capable men, and create a paradise upon earth. This is accompanied by a neglect of the inner problems, an outward direction of the thoughts, an overvaluation of the human capacity, a breaking out of an insatiable thirst for happiness, and an awakening of tremendous passions.

But within the sphere of modern life itself there is no lack of a tendency to balance and counteract the social movement. This is the movement towards the *liberation and development of the individual*, which has formed a main element in the modern type of life since the passing of the Middle Ages, and still persists throughout every change. In the past, the individual was valued only as a member of a larger whole and all order in his life came from thence; but now this is

reversed, in the sense that all spiritual life presents itself, in the first place, to the individual and all common life is erected upon the basis of the individual. This high valuation of the individual involves the abandonment of many of the moral impulses which previously seemed indispensable. The educative power of the great social orders and fixed systems suffers a decline; while authority and tradition are undermined, and manners and customs lose their sacredness. There seems to be nowhere a norm independent of man; while reverence and piety increasingly disappear from human relationships. In addition, the modern development of technical science and of facilities for intercourse gives rise to a greater freedom of social movement, and helps to break down the ancient limitations, while at the same time weakening the controlling power of the social environment and of super-individual authority. It is possible for all this to be understood and made use of in such a fashion that the accidental position and mood of the individual becomes the highest court of appeal, and social life signifies nothing more than an encounter (which easily becomes a conflict) of individuals bent upon their own welfare.

But for humanity as a whole, the movement towards the individual is by no means wholly negative; it is also very decidedly positive—even in a moral sense. For the more powerful development of the individual involves the desire for a greater directness and truthfulness of life; man is to regulate his actions not under the influence of outer pressure, but according to his own conviction and feeling; under no circumstances is he to remain a mere unit of the race, or a fragment of an organisation. He is to stand upon his own feet, to develop his own nature and express the latter in all his actions.

Following this tendency, freedom is developed, not only in the political and social sphere, but also in all the personal connections of man with man. This is to be seen in the relationship of parents and children, and in the realm of sex relationships. It may be asked: Why should not the freedom of a rational being develop an inner law which shall be more deeply influential than any outward compulsion? And

indeed if the word be taken in its deeper sense, individuality, in all its extension, can become a constructive norm. For spiritual individuality is not given ready-made; it is a continuous task; it involves demands and fixes limits; and in its attitude towards matter it works as a transforming and form-giving power. It thus ennobles all personal relationships, and every kind of love, especially (as the strongest dam against the crude natural instinct) sexual love; thus it refines all feeling, permits art and science to see more in the things, makes the particularity of the separate moment more significant, and accordingly effects, throughout, an elevation of life; at the same time, it expels mere self-will, and commits man to the law of his own nature. All this holds, indeed, only in as far as individuality is understood in the higher sense. But why should this not be the case; why should this great idea remain tied to its lowest interpretation?

Just as, rightly understood, individuality contains within its own nature a law and a formative force, so the movement towards the individual evolves from mutual human relationships a wealth of connections and limitations. The freedom which the individual demands for himself he cannot possibly deny to others as their right; thus the separate units are compelled to respect and to limit one another. Here, too, the idea of justice acquires no little power.

Further, the more free movement of modern life brings the individuals into incomparably closer mutual relationship, and this effects an adjustment and a wearing down of individual eccentricities. Thus there results, in social life, a common spiritual atmosphere, accompanied by general opinions and general movements, which in spite of all apparent self-will, firmly surround the individuals and securely hold them together. The attempt to reckon for something in the estimation of one's fellow-men, to find recognition and distinction (or at any rate, to avoid falling) in their eyes, is, in general, a particularly strong motive force in human conduct; and with this growth of mutual relationship and the greater publicity and consciousness of modern life it becomes stronger than ever. Public opinion now becomes a conscience for

humanity and for man. And is it not characteristic of its connection with the elevation of the individual that the same thinker who peculiarly emphasised the right of the individual in the state, in society, and in education, namely John Locke, was also the first to desire to see the recognition, side by side with the divine and the political law, of a law of public opinion? It is certainly true that conduct in response to the pressure of public opinion is at first decidedly external and superficial. Yet even the endeavour to obtain a respectable appearance in these matters is not wholly without value; and it is of importance to remember that in this case, too, we may rely upon the movement from without to within, from the action to the inner feeling. That which in the first place was done for the sake of the others can gradually give rise to pleasure for its own sake, and finally, as an end in itself, serve as a guide for our conduct.

While public opinion surrounds man as an invisible power and guides him with invisible reins, there is also no lack, in the modern world, of visible relationships. In the place of the old organisations, work itself produces new links binding men together; out of the different interests which are here in question there are developed groupings which are outwardly free, though inwardly no less united than was formerly the case; and in the place of the old communal sense there arises the fellowship feeling of these free associations. Now, too, the individual finds himself compelled to subordinate himself to a whole and to make sacrifices in its interests; here, too, that which was first taken up from motives of selfish interest can gradually become an end in itself.

An individualisation of existence, accompanied by an elevation of man above his petty ego, is brought about in another direction through the idea of nationality. While the eighteenth century clung to the abstract concept of humanity, the nineteenth discovered and developed a wealth of individual formations; just as the whole life of humanity experienced an immeasurable enrichment in this way, so there resulted from this standpoint, also, a powerful reaction against the egoism of the individual. General tasks become much more

immediate to the individual and more imperative for him when people and country hold up the peculiarity of his own specific character on a large scale and in a powerful visible form, and at the same time introduce the passing moment into the current of historical life. The individuality of the nation becomes the bridge from the separate interests of the individual to a devotion to general ends. How much can thus be gained for the strengthening of life and the development of character was magnificently demonstrated by Fichte in his speeches to the German people; though whether the matter was always understood in this noble sense is another question. For the individuality of a nation, just like that of an individual, can be understood in a higher or a lower sense; if a people takes its own character as a great task, as a noble aim, it will unceasingly seek to improve itself, while testing and reviewing the existing state of things; thus it will recognise a general reason beyond all that is special and individual, and will subordinate its own conduct to this. Then the most powerful development of a nation can constitute no disadvantage or danger for any other nation. If, however, the national character, in its immediate condition, is unconditionally retained, glorified, and recklessly and passionately defended, then not only must the inner development of the nation come to a standstill, but there will arise a state of mutual repulsion and hostility amongst the different peoples. All the unfairness and bitterness formerly produced by the inter-religious conflicts may then experience a revival on the basis of nationalism; and in particular we may again see the employment of twofold weights and measures, in the sense that each demands for himself, as a right, that which he denounces as injustice when practised by the others. Formerly it was said *cujus regio, ejus religio*; now we consider this barbaric. But will later generations think any better of the motto of *cujus regio, ejus natio*, which has to-day attained to such power? But such possibilities need not necessarily develop into actuality. The rational concept of nationality can assert itself, overcome mere nature, and form a main factor of moral education for the people of to-day. It is a retrogression to the eighteenth century to ignore this

mighty stream of life and power, and to recognise the idea of humanity only in its abstract form.

Thus modern life is interwoven with a wealth of individual formations; through its whole length and breadth works a process of individualisation which, with its form-giving and consolidating power, gives rise to inexhaustible moral impulses. It is another question, however, whether such an individualisation of existence is easily reconcilable with that socialisation which we have just considered, whether there is not here a sharp conflict of movements, accompanied by a tension between the moral influences. The two movements agree at any rate in one main tendency: in the elevation of man, in the greater care for his well-being, in the more powerful development of his existence. In both cases man forms the central point of reality. But this common feature does not remain free from attack; it encounters serious opposition from a department of life which in the first place should also be concerned only with man's welfare—from the *modern construction of work*.

We need not dwell upon the educative and moral power of work. The inner development of man's true life, the growth beyond the early natural motives (which is the fundamental idea permeating our whole study), is never more conspicuous than at this point. The object, which man at first lays hold of from without and as a mere means for his purposes, becomes familiar to him and of value in itself, the more his activity becomes bound up with it and represented in it. Thus work becomes an end in itself and a source of pure joy to those who are carrying it forward. Now man can subordinate himself to the tasks of his work and in its success wholly lose sight of his own advantage. Therefore, the more energetic the work becomes, the more it grows to be a matter bound up with the whole man, the more it may serve as a liberation from petty egoism, the more it can contribute to an inner enlargement of man's being. Now it is obvious that the present day is more than any other age devoted to work, more than ever before is man's whole power put forth, more than ever before is our activity bound up with the objects, more than ever before is all success dependent upon their being overcome and appro-

priated. Thus work, too, should now exhibit its educative influence in the fullest degree. And in reality life does attain an immense earnestness; all idleness is banished, all purposeless activity is thrust aside, all self-will is rejected, when man comes under the disciplinary influence of the object and must obey, without escape, the law of the thing itself. There is here developed a consciousness of duty and an action in obedience to duty, which, in subordination to an objective order, in the recognition of a condition of dependency, at the same time arouses a feeling of dignity and greatness and lends a greater firmness to the whole of life.

At the same time, modern work, with its immense complexes, must force upon the individual the feeling that in himself he is capable of absolutely nothing, but that all success demands the co-operation of many individuals, and that the individual has no value apart from this common achievement. Thus attention is continually directed towards the matter as a whole, while the individual is impressed with a sense of his immeasurable littleness. *Multi pertransibunt et augibetur scientia.*

But this psychic influence on the part of work is subject to a condition: that which is brought by the outward occupation must be converted into inner feeling and be appropriated by the whole man; and everything which hinders this inward direction also endangers the influence. Now it is precisely at this point that the modern type of work exhibits serious dangers. Work has grown more and more beyond the immediate feeling and capacity of the individual; it has become more and more technical in character and has in this way become infinitely refined and differentiated. This increasing division, however, does not permit the individual to perceive more than an increasingly small fragment of the whole; and finally he and his thought, too, become tied down to this fragment. He no longer succeeds in holding the idea of the whole, he becomes a will-less cog in a great machine. Now he can no longer feel the work to be his own; he ceases to take pleasure in it and becomes indifferent or even hostile towards it. The spiritual contact with the object becomes increasingly less real, until ultimately the educative effect of work upon

the soul entirely ceases. At the same time the spiritual influence of the work is reduced by reason of its feverish acceleration, which urges man forward from one accomplishment to another, gives rise to unceasing alteration, and does not permit even the strongest impression to strike roots in his soul. Finally the increasing intensity of the struggle for existence, the severe conflict of forces, with all its moral temptations, as produced and unceasingly accentuated by modern life, becomes a direct source of injury to the work of moral education. The excitement and passion of these struggles of individuals, classes and peoples, threatens to stifle all inner joy in the objects themselves and to suppress all feeling of solidarity. Thus work, which should, according to its innermost nature, bind men together, appears sharply to divide them and to drive them to unrelenting hostility.

The core of all these dangers is the separation of work from the soul and the overmastering of man by a soulless external activity. The unrestricted development of this tendency leads to a mechanisation of existence, a reduction of man to a mere tool with a soul. The sharp antithesis to the motive forces of which we have just treated is obvious; in their case, man with his feeling and subjective condition experienced an immeasurable enhancement; now, on the other hand, he is deprived of all value in himself. In the former case he was treated as the highest end in itself; in the latter he becomes a mere will-less slave of work, a mere means in a soulless process of civilisation. Only a dispirited feeling can endure such a contradiction.

Our study has shown that modern life, especially in its specific characteristics, is rich in moral motive forces. To fling all this away, and to complain of the age in sentimental or pharisaical vein, must therefore be looked upon as a fundamental mistake. But at the same time the movement of the age is shown to be full of problems; both the separate points and their mutual relationship offer great tasks and demand decisions of our own. That which is of spiritual importance has always first to be gained; the age has first to acquire its own ideality. The main points are here set forth as separate theses.

1. In the case of the individual motive forces, the general level of life exhibits a confused mixture of higher and lower conceptions, of action and reaction. An energetic division and a gathering together of the higher elements is in this case needful. And this can never under any circumstances result of itself from this condition of confusion ; it demands a movement to the moral principles, a development of morality, not as a mere accompaniment of civilisation, but as a complete end in itself.

2. As they exist in their immediate form the moral impulses of the age form an unendurable contradiction. Socialisation and individualisation draw us in opposite directions. And in sharp opposition to both stands the mechanisation of life, an apparently unavoidable result of modern work. Such contradictions as these cannot be removed by means of faint-hearted compromises, which may perhaps gladden the heart of academic philosophers, but which leave humanity indifferent. There is need of a courageous deepening of thought and life in order to grasp, in these antitheses, the different sides, tasks and relationships of an all-embracing reality.

3. Characteristic of all the modern motive forces is the movement from without towards within, from action to feeling, the gradual alteration and ennobling of the motives through the process of life. Such a movement is incomprehensible without the assistance of an inner nature, without a depth of the soul, uniting man with a spiritual order. This spiritual basis of our life is to-day obscured. It needs to be worked out and to be brought into prominence. Otherwise life remains empty in all its wealth and spiritless in all its activity.

It is obvious that all three theses point in the same direction. Our spiritual capacity must be more independently developed ; our fundamental moral power must be revivified. This can never be given to us by the circumstances of the age. It is, and always must be, a free act on the part of man. Must we not believe that in our case, too, we shall find the courage to develop spiritual power? Can the German people, in particular, permanently forget that it gave rise to such great movements of moral renewal as the Reformation and the critical philosophy?

THE INNER MOVEMENT OF MODERN LIFE

VI

THE INNER MOVEMENT OF MODERN LIFE*

The Modern World, throughout its whole development, has been characterised by an inner unrest, by a restless struggling forward—not only in an external sense, but also on the part of man against himself—by reflection and doubt with regard to our own being, by a yearning and craving for clarity as to our purpose. Within the modern period there have been, not only hard conflicts in the world of concepts, but real transformations of the most deep-going description: the Renaissance was compelled to give way to the Enlightenment, and the Enlightenment to the New Humanism, while the last saw itself forced back and destroyed by the modern movement (in the narrow sense of the word modern). Humanity was forced again and again to abandon the point at which it had begun to settle down; ever anew the modern itself became a problem and a task, a war-cry of one party and a term of reproach in the mouth of the other.

Such insecurity and unrest proclaim that modern life, from the very beginning, is by no means simple, but on the contrary contains different goals within itself, nay that it is burdened with a thoroughgoing opposition, an unbearable contradiction. Such a contradiction cannot be overcome without a complete transformation of the first position, without the heroic building-up of a new life and creative work—our entire existence being thereby converted into a great task. And this is, in reality, the situation confronting us; modern life contains, as a matter

* From the *Zeit* (Vienna), vol. xvii., No. 209 (October 1, 1898).

of fact, not one, but two movements; and these are, moreover, in opposition to one another. We need merely to take two recognised facts and place them in a closer relationship than is usual, thus testing their compatibility, in order to perceive that modern life contains a severe contradiction and is torn with an unbearable tension.

Modern life finds its peculiarity in promoting a development of life from the standpoint of the human subject; it moves from the subject towards the object, from man towards the world. This is in the deepest contrast to the older type of life which began in Ancient Greece and acquired a fixed form in the Middle Ages, and according to which man was a fragment of a given and closed cosmic order, securely surrounding him and imparting its content to his life. Thus the truth of his actions depended entirely on his relationship to the world. In this case, the whole, as an organism, embraced man within it as a member, so that the human sphere was dominated by organisation, at first in the form of the state, then in that of the church; to break away from this was to abandon all reason. The leading idea of life and conduct was accordingly *order*, which assigned to all freedom its measure and its limits.

The modern period begins with the moment when the subject, strengthened and deepened through the work of millenniums, felt this bond and this subordination to be an unbearable coercion, and at the same time perceived, in the previous view of the world, a mere reflection of his own activity. With the spread of this conviction there begins a complete transformation of our reality. All that is apparently fixed grows fluid, the subject becomes the central point, at which everything must justify itself and whose activity must first build up a world; at the same time the individual now becomes the supporter of society and communicates to it its life and power. Order gives way to freedom, while man's activity and self-consciousness increase immeasurably. Not only is man nothing more than that which he makes of himself, but he seems to impress his nature upon everything else. How can he now fail to feel that he is lord and master of the things?

This aggrandisement of man is the most conspicuous feature

of modern life; but it is not the whole of this life. It is remarkable that within the field of modern life an opposed movement, of no less strength, is working towards the diminution and subordination of man. This movement is produced and developed by the thirst for reality, the desire for participation in the real life and innermost core of the things themselves in all their infinitude. To the open mind there can be no doubt that the older mode of life involved man in his merely human ideas and feelings; that, in this way, even the widest seeming expansion of life, in reality left him still confined within the narrow limits of his own circle; and that the pettiness of his merely human character stood between him and the things—the most difficult of all obstacles. Now, on the other hand, there is awakened a desire for a more genuine life based upon the breadth and truth of the things themselves; now man must take up the hardest of all conflicts, the struggle against himself; now it is a question of overcoming himself, of breaking through the oppressive narrowness, of destroying anthropomorphism root and branch. The world is now to be understood, not from the standpoint of man, but man from that of the world; this was what Bacon demanded, and the movement was completed by Spinoza, with the unyielding energy and severe simplicity of a construction of life based upon the eternity and infinity of the whole. This tendency gives rise to aspirations and moods entirely different from those developed by the movement towards freedom. In this case man must suspend all feeling and put aside the desire for egotistic happiness; but in return for this self-denial he may draw upon the unperverted nature of the things themselves; the world now stands before him with greater firmness, and experience is more effective, imparting proportion and stability to the whole of human action. The dark mist which had hitherto shrouded our life is now dissipated. Man's heart, too, acquires great peace and quiet blessedness from the consciousness of possessing eternal truth.

Thus the ideals of freedom and of truth confront one another in modern life. And they are not so easily united as might appear to a thoughtless mind. On the contrary, they contain,

as they immediately confront us, opposed systems of values and impel human action along sharply divergent paths. On the one hand, the subject seeks to master the object, on the other the object endeavours to draw the subject to itself; here man is raised and enlarged, there he is depreciated and limited; here his feelings are passionately excited, there as far as possible reduced; here the whole content of life is communicated through us and our organisation, there the human is as energetically as possible eliminated; here all movement points towards man, there it presses forward beyond him to infinity. Wherever we look, we see antithesis, dissension, life-and-death struggle.

This is an antagonism, not of individuals or even of parties, but within the spiritual work itself. Such an antagonism can neither be quietly accepted nor peacefully composed: it calls for an overcoming, and it can find this through progressive action only, through the establishment of a new position of life, in which the human and the cosmic types, subject and object, give up their hostility and unite in a common work. The solution can be sought in one direction only, namely through the disclosure of a world within the human sphere itself, through laying hold of something superhuman within man himself; while, at the same time, the world, which at first seems to weigh upon us as an alien power, acquires a soul, and reveals itself as an abode of spiritual forces. Then ties are woven from the one to the other; then, out of the contradiction itself, there can proceed a life incomparably richer in content and essential being than that known to earlier ages.

But such a solution does not depend upon general tendencies, upon words or formulæ. There is need for an exact answer. We must discover a new reality through action and achievement; our own being and life must be raised. In reality it is for this that the modern period is unceasingly striving, stimulated and impelled by the deep opposition within its own aspiration. But only gradually, as the result of experiences and disappointments, does it seem able to approach this goal; again and again it is thrown back to the beginning, and ever anew the same problem confronts us. Possibly this movement is ruled by a

certain rhythm, a recurrence of related types. At any rate the inner unrest and insecurity of modern life has now found an explanation.

With the recognition of this main problem it becomes possible to arrange and grade the modern period. The latter reaches the height of its creative work only when an overcoming of the antithesis is attempted; whenever the two sides become isolated and turn against one another, then, in spite of all activity on the part of individuals, we cannot fail to recognise a spiritual ebb. This isolation results, on the one hand, in a tendency towards absolute subjectivism, towards freeing the subject from all union with the objects; and, on the other, in the opposite tendency towards an absolute objectivism, in which the entire man is dominated and absorbed by the environing world. Both describe themselves, with peculiar emphasis, as modern; but in reality they are only the basic elements of modern life, and neither its height nor its productive force. The various new movements and stages which have been produced by the aspiration to overcome this contradiction, give rise to, and mark off, the principal sections of the modern period. Let us briefly consider its development from this standpoint.

The great problem was taken up and answered, for the first time, by the Renaissance. The enormous strengthening of the subject effected by this great movement is known to all of us; but at the same time we must not forget that it brought with it a stronger objectivity on the part of the things themselves, a clearer view of reality, and a more objective world-consciousness. As Jakob Burckhardt says, in his inimitable way: "In the Middle Ages, the two sides of consciousness (that directed towards the world, and that directed towards man's own inner life) lay dreaming or only half-awake, as though under a common veil. The veil was woven of faith, childlike prejudice and delusion; seen through it, the world and history seemed wondrously tinted, but man knew himself only as race, nation, party, corporation, family, or in some other general form. It was in Italy that this veil first dissolved; men awoke to an objective view and treatment of the state and of the things of this

world in general, and at the same time the subject arose, with full power. The man became the spiritual individual and knew himself as such." In reality the unravelling of the mediæval entanglement of subject and object forms a main achievement of the Renaissance. This separation was indispensable in order that each might find its chief strength and develop its own specific nature. Only when set free from man can the world unfold its riches and demonstrate its stability, and only through wrestling with the objective world can human life, in the modern age, gain the living spiritual inwardness which separates it so widely from the dreamlike inwardness of feeling of the Middle Ages.

But the Renaissance would not have become an age of great creative activity, if it had not understood, further, how to overcome, in some way, the gap created between the subject and the world. This was done through the development of a world of living beauty. Here all that is pushing upwards from within presses for visible illustration, and only through outer representation does the psychic image acquire full reality; conversely, however, the outer world receives a thoroughgoing inspiration through the artistic treatment, and thus it can appeal to man and reveal its deeps to him. Each side aspires towards the other, the interweaving of the two giving rise to works that will never fail to elevate and delight us. But the greatness of these works is far from guaranteeing the correctness of the solution, in principle. Man and world are still too closely related to one another; they are conceived, from the very beginning, to be more of the same nature than seemed possible to the work and conviction of a later period: the immediate ensouling of nature hinders exact investigation and leaves a large opening for obscurity and superstition; while the tendency towards artistic and technical work does not lead man to independence and to an incontestable firmness in his inner life. With all the wealth of life and beauty, the general position remained confused, and a further distinction and classification more and more became the imperative need of the age.

The Enlightenment took up this task, and sharpened the antithesis of subject and object to an extent hitherto unknown.

Nature is now to win full autonomy, and for this purpose it must discard every psychic quality and become a system of mere masses and movements. At the same time the subject becomes concentrated in itself, man discovers a reason immanent in himself, a racial possession of eternal truths; and with such support he feels himself strong enough to develop a "natural" justice, a "natural" morality, a "natural" religion, independent of tradition and environment. But if, in the first instance, he withdraws wholly from the world into himself, he keeps the world continually before his eyes, he does not abandon relationship with it; on the contrary, he is eagerly concerned, by overcoming the gulf, to understand and dominate it. For this purpose the chief essential appears to be the distinction, in the soul itself, between active and passive movements, between those which are cosmic and those which are merely human. As the purest of the first class we perceive conceptual thought, with its critical energy and its penetrating clarity; while on the merely human side come the passions and feelings, which must give way if man and the cosmos are to find one another. In this case thought uniformly controls knowledge and conduct. If, without in any way looking outside itself, it develops its own nature and its own laws in purity, it is here looked upon as expressing, at the same time, the content of the great world; without in any way touching one another, thought and being are held together by a strict parallelism. Thought, further, makes man strong enough to shape the surrounding world according to the dictates of reason. A diligent practical activity more and more diminishes the gulf between us and the things.

Although all that modern life owes to the joyous faith and active labour of the Enlightenment can be forgotten only because the following period has absorbed within itself the best fruits of this activity and enjoys them as a matter-of-course, yet there is agreement as to the untenability of the specific thesis of the Enlightenment. This parallelism between thought and being, which made thought self-dependent and at the same time looked upon it as corresponding with a world situated without, went down before the superior criticism of Kant. The

whole of this system of life was, moreover, felt to be inadequate, because nowhere did it offer man a direct relationship either with himself or with the things. Since a rationalistic thought was the sole means of mediation, life unavoidably became cool, artificial and abstract; and the more the popularisation of the ideas in question enabled humanity to experience these consequences, the more powerful became the reaction on the part of immediate feeling. Then came the "age of stress and struggle," and finally the field was held by the German classical period with its New Humanism.

In the New Humanism the movement towards clear distinction gives way to that towards fruitful union, and an original life takes the place of rational reflection. The desire for great systems of relationships acquires an irresistible power; nature and spirit, as they are now called, again strive towards union and form a common life; spirit is now to be purified and enlarged through nature, while nature, by contact with spirit, is to acquire transparency and soul. This reveals a clear connection with the Renaissance; now, again, life and beauty are the moving spirits of the creative work, yet at the same time we are compelled to recognise important new developments. Not only are nature and spirit more clearly distinguished from one another, but each becomes more consolidated to a whole, and there develops a definite relationship of whole to whole: one and the same life, namely an artistic building up and shaping, a creation and construction, links both realms together; but in nature it remains unconscious and is not free; the spirit alone raises it to the stage of consciousness and freedom. But by reason of the relationship in essential being, the elevation to freedom, such as is accomplished by artistic creation with its imagination, is at the same time a revelation of the deepest core of the things; the ideal reality is also the purest truth of being. Thus freedom and truth appear united in *one life*. Man has found the whole and has at the same time grown within himself.

The life of the present day, in this case also, feeds upon the rich creative work that sprang from such conviction and manifestation. But here again our attitude of thankful veneration in

the presence of imperishable works of art does not imply a recognition of the basic principle. The actual movement of life has already carried us far away from the latter, further perhaps than from the main tendency of the Enlightenment. The oppositions have shown themselves harder and sharper than was conceived by this synthesis, while nature has been stripped of her artistic robe and again appears completely devoid of soul; and in the case of man himself difficult complications appear, at first in social life and then in his own inner life. Amidst the unrest, care and passion resulting from this state of things, the sunny cheerfulness of the German classical period vanishes into the remote distance, our life divides itself more than ever, and our fundamental relationship to the world becomes painfully obscure.

Under such conditions the separate basic elements of modern life again assert themselves independently and each demands the whole man for itself. In the first place, the real world pushes itself to the front with a giant strength fed upon research and technical work, and seeks wholly to subordinate man to a soulless routine of work, while draining him of every drop of independent inner life. But this tendency cannot long remain without opposition; the subject soon recollects its first birthright in the inner life, and subjectivism breaks out with a force all the more elementary the more man had previously been oppressed and intimidated by soulless forces. The characteristic mark of the present day is the sharp opposition of these two tendencies, the bitter conflict between subjective and objective life, the oscillation between soulless work and isolated feeling. But to-day, too, there can be no doubt that the creative power and the ultimate right of modern life lies not on this or that side, but beyond the antithesis, and no doubt that a great task has again been set before us, the task of a synthesis which, while fully recognising the existing complications and antitheses, presses forward beyond these to a depth at which the life-process is able by reason of its own inner firmness to bridge the gulf and in itself to gain a cosmic character. The path that we ourselves favour has been dealt with more especially in the *Kampf um einen geistigen Lebensinhalt* (1896) and in

The Truth of Religion (trans. Dr. Tudor Jones, new edit., 1913). Finally, we believe that to-day far more forces are working—consciously or unconsciously—towards this goal than might be imagined from an examination of the surface of modern life.

THOUGHTS UPON THE EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE

VII

THOUGHTS UPON THE EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE*

Our present attitude with respect to the education of the people resembles our attitude in regard to so many other problems. We take up the matter in a spirit of joyful confidence and devote to it much effort and work, we overcome resistances and feel certain of a victorious advance along the whole line; then, however, there arise doubts as to whether the successes at particular points really link themselves together to make a general success, and whether much that at first seems pure gain is not accompanied by loss—nay, whether the loss does not ultimately more than counterbalance the gain. Should such doubts increase, our work, in spite of outward advance, must lack the firm faith and full devotion without which nothing great can succeed. Can it be denied that with regard to the education of the people such feelings as these are widespread, and that they seem to be increasing rather than diminishing?

The task, in its most general principle, is one which the peoples of to-day cannot evade. Humanity has grown out of that older conception of life which confined a complete education to narrow circles and permitted those outside to partake in the spiritual possessions of the race only in a very inadequate and secondary fashion. We demand the right of all to participate in these possessions, not only because we hold that "all who bear the human countenance" are justly called upon to develop their capacities and to co-operate in the work of the whole, but also because we hope that such a participation will yield

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an important gain for human culture itself. Accordingly, our age attacked the problem full of joy and confident of victory. The greatest goodwill was shown upon both sides; on the one a great readiness to work and a capacity for sacrifice; on the other, a deep thirst for instruction and a ready receptivity. But in the midst of all this diligent work we grow uncertain whether the path which has been struck out leads safely to the goal, whether, in fact, the peculiar position of the age allows the latter to seem attainable at all, whether, therefore, all the immeasurable effort and labour which is being put into the task does not threaten finally to result in nothing, or even to give rise to the exact opposite of that which we desired.

We wish to see education spread on every side, and we seek to work towards this end with our whole capacity. But have we ourselves got that which we desire to communicate to others? Does our age possess an education of a unified description, wherewith it can lay hold of the whole human soul and develop it from its innermost centre? Affirmation of this question is impossible, if only by reason of the sharp division between the old and the new modes of thought, a division which penetrates the age and reaches to all the ramifications of life. The ideals which exert their influence upon us from the past have been severely shaken; while the new bodies of thought which the present sets up in their stead, are very far from being sufficiently deep to replace the old. We cannot escape from the impression that while the former mode of thought has become too narrow, the latter is still too shallow. Since, however, the old and the new modes are in vigorous opposition, they must inflict severe injury upon one another; the complete man is not aroused to put forth his whole strength and feeling; there is a lack of an all-commanding goal, an all-embracing synthesis of life, which can give to all our work, unity, harmony, and proportion. Thus, uncertain of the main tendency of our effort, we are afraid of provoking the contradictions latent in the present situation, and this fear has the effect of unavoidably driving our work to the periphery of existence, leaving us concerned rather to attain the greatest possible wealth of accomplishments, than to secure an inner unity.

We must remember, further, that the course of the nineteenth century directed the work of human culture more and more away from the problems of the inner world, with which the high art and speculative philosophy of the German Classical Period had been predominantly concerned, and towards the exploration of the visible world and the shaping of our immediate existence. Matters taking this turn, the work became ever more ramified, man became increasingly and more closely attached to his environment; and with such an expansion of life its concentration sank more and more into the background. This direction towards outward accomplishment and success caused the care for the whole man and for the condition of his soul to seem a matter of very inferior importance.

When, however, the fundamental relationship of human life is that of man to his environment, the intellectual element unavoidably wins the upper hand, and men will be inclined to multiply knowledge as far as possible, to extend their horizon, to seek merely intellectualistic explanations for every problem and to content themselves with these. And since we aim at this for ourselves, we shall endeavour also to communicate it to others. More particularly in the case of a predominantly intellectual culture, however, the act of communication to those situated outside the work is unavoidably accompanied by a very rapid deterioration. For the labour of investigation and the conflict with resistances is incommunicable. Doubt, with its disruptive yet strengthening power, cannot be passed on to others. The results only, can be communicated in popular fashion, and in this way a certain falsification of the matter is a danger very close at hand. Everything difficult and obscure is as far as possible concealed, the corners and edges are rounded off, and the whole matter is easily made to appear more finished than in reality it is; striking features likely to produce a strong impression are as far as possible brought to the front; the desire for comprehensibility easily outstrips the care for strict truth; and, moreover, such a representation easily splits up into isolated fragments of information, and dispenses with inward unity. A variegated jumble of mental stimuli is supplied, and men's interests are drawn now in one

direction, now in another. At the same time we are threatened with the danger of a too high valuation of this great heap of knowledge, as if, just as it happened to be dumped down, it was the highest arbiter of truth and falsehood, of good and evil. Along such a path as this what can the receptive soul hope to obtain? Will not everything which it may gain by these means easily be outweighed through the production of a semi-educated state of mind, an illusion of education, carrying with it the supposed ability to speak, argue and pass judgment upon every possible subject, and through the weakening of the sense of reverence for the great human problems and for the mystery of life? Thus the expansion of existence which has been effected in this way from without easily leads to superficiality and inward dissipation; and this in its turn is apt to give rise to a state of mind which rejoices in negation, for the latter produces an appearance, although nothing more than an appearance, of liberation. In such a state of mind the most miserable mediocrity feels itself able, without the slightest effort, to rise superior to the greatest minds. Never does this joy of negation on the part of superficial people seem so objectionable and so impudent as it does in the sphere of ethics and religion. The whole education which is acquired along such paths as these, is such that it does not penetrate to the centre of the soul but merely attaches itself to the periphery; in spite of all outward nearness this kind of education remains inwardly remote, with that remoteness which men like Pestalozzi and Froebel felt so painfully and combated so energetically.

We should have to close our eyes in order to avoid seeing the widespread existence of such dangers and evils in the present age. But dangers and evils produce very different effects according to the attitude which we adopt, on principle, towards the matter as a whole; those who, from the very beginning, have approached it in a spirit of doubt will be thereby held back from any further work; but those who are fully convinced of its greatness and necessity will take these obstacles as impulses prompting them to grasp the matter more deeply, to liberate it from abuses, and to direct it more carefully along the right path to the goal. An organisation

of the various efforts now being made for the education of the people is peculiarly important and indispensable, because there is such a great need for clarification and deepening, and because in this case it is of such importance to find and keep the right path in the midst of the threatened aberrations. Mutual expression and understanding can, however, remove much miscomprehension and clear away many obstacles.

At this point we must guard ourselves against a misunderstanding which may easily result from the use of the expression "education of the people," thereby giving rise to a perverted conception of the problem. By "education of the people" it must not for a moment be supposed that we mean a special kind of education. We do not refer to a condensed preparation of our spiritual and intellectual possessions, suitable for the needs and interests of the great masses: we are not thinking of a diluted concoction of the real draught of education which we are so kind and condescending as to dispense to the majority. No: a thousand times, no! Just as there is only one truth common to us all, so there is only one education common to us all. In the case of the education of the people the only question is: How is this common education to be developed under the special circumstances of simple conditions of life and large masses of people? That this should be accomplished is to our mind the decisive mark of all real education. An education which depends upon a particular situation in life and is confined in its effect to this, which does not direct itself to man as man and promise to advance him, which from its very foundation, and throughout all its ramifications, is not foremost an education of the essence of man's being—such a system does not deserve to be honoured with the name of education. Our efforts towards the education of the people derive their compelling impulse, in the first place, from the fact that in performing this task, human culture, as a whole, has to be referred back to its purely human foundation, stripped of all meretricious adornments, and built up solely on what is truthful and essential. Thus we seek, not only for the sake of others, but also for ourselves: we do not come as possessors who condescend to give to others of their super-

fluity; on the contrary each stands in need of the other, and while we give we desire also to receive; it is our desire, through a common work, to penetrate below all external superfluities and hindrances to a true core of life where we may securely establish ourselves.

But is there a human education in such a sense, an education which makes the principal thing that which lies beyond all social distinction, which recognises a problem in man *as man* and places this problem before all others? This is certainly open to serious doubt. And the affirmative answer to the question must be associated with an indispensable condition; it demands a definite conviction with regard to man's being and his place in the whole, and at the same time with regard to that which distinguishes human culture and civilisation from nature.

If all culture and civilisation were a mere addition to nature, a decoration or refinement of nature, it could never attain to an inner connection or to a rousing and progressive force; it could not give rise to an inner community of men and unite the efforts of all in a common purpose.

It can fulfil such demands only if it represents a new stage of life and at the same time sets a new task for life as a whole. Such a new stage does actually appear in the case of man. It lies before us in *the spiritual life*, in as far as the latter is raised above the separation and multiplicity that is characteristic of our first impression of the world, and is comprehended as a whole. For then we recognise in it a movement of life from a mere network of mutual relationships to a condition of independence [*Beisichselbstsein*]; in this independence it acquires an inner solidarity: here the whole embraces the separate points, and in such a way that it can be grasped and experienced as a whole at the separate points, and that, in this way, the separate points are able to become enlarged to infinity. This results in a thoroughgoing transformation of life, all its aims being essentially altered as compared with the earlier stage; then the preservation and strengthening of the separate point was the leading aim, now it is a question of participating in an all-embracing spiritual life, of becoming an active member of this life.

Just as in this case the unity of the whole precedes all difference, so before all particular tasks of the separate points there stands the task of effecting the direction towards the whole, of making the whole vital at each separate point, while at the same time progressing from the existing concatenation and limitation to self-activity and originality.

Thus there is, in reality, a purpose for man *as man*; in him there come together different stages of reality, different worlds; and these meet not merely as if in an arena, for he himself is called upon to co-operate. The centre of gravity of this life is not indicated to him by the necessity of nature, for his own decision is effective; only through his own volition can he play an independent part in life and develop a spiritual energy. This does not take place through a mere peaceful continuation of the existing condition of things, but through a reversal and transformation. The new standpoint reveals new standards and brings with it norms which claim to rule all actions. Life as a whole becomes converted into a problem. An immeasurable amount of work results more particularly through the fact that the new life cannot simply develop itself to its perfect form from within outward, but that in the case of man it progresses only through a continual adjustment with the world of experience: it can unfold itself only by drawing the latter to itself, overcoming its resistances and linking up everything that it meets to the inner movement, thereby essentially raising the former. When thus comprehended human life takes the form of laborious work and severe conflict, but at the same time it acquires an incomparable greatness. For now man participates in movements of the world as a whole; with his work he can promote the advancement of the whole, and increase the content of spiritual reality: in such a construction of life he can feel himself far superior to all mere nature and all visible existence; he now carries a high aim within his own being and thereby acquires inner independence and firmness. A civilisation which is based upon such a life can dispense with everything that is artificial and insubstantial: since it promises man a new self, a self which for the first time is worthy of this name, it can also acquire the elementary force of a self-assertive movement. Since, however,

such a civilisation of essential being finds its decisive task in the whole and within man as man, the privilege of participating in it cannot be limited to particular occupations and classes of society; it exists also for the poorest and simplest. To the forum that is here in question there is no distinction between upper class and lower class, between rich and poor, or between learned and unlearned. Despite all these distinctions we can see the man in every human creature, and can respect and honour him, understand and advance him. We can all unite in the construction of a spiritual world over against that of petty human routine.

Thus there is, in truth, a possibility of a truly human education, and therefore of a true education of the people. At the same time we see with what the latter is chiefly concerned. It is a question of bringing to full recognition the great task that each human being carries within himself, of arousing independent spiritual life at every point, of keeping clearly before us the guiding basic lines of our existence, of subordinating our action, in all its ramifications, to the movement which results from a direction to a truly self-dependent life.

The manner in which this leads to a characteristic construction of the work of education may become clearer when we briefly consider the history of the concept of education amongst the German people. As is well known the term education [*Bildung*] was not transferred from the outer to the inner, from the corporeal to the spiritual, until the second half of the eighteenth century.* This took place in close connection with the literary and artistic mode of thought of that age: for example, F. A. Wolf considered the possession of a literature common to all to be the chief distinguishing characteristic of real culture and called this culture "the spiritual or literary." The romanticists adopted this expression with the greatest eagerness; for it served them at the same time as a means to separate an intellectual aristocracy, such as was pleasing to the vanity of a merely æsthetic culture, from the masses. When Schleiermacher gave addresses upon religion

* See Imelmann in his edition of Klopstock's Odes, p. 86; Paulsen's article *Bildung* in Rein's *Enzyklop. Handbuch der Pädagogik;* Biese in the *Neues Jahrbuch für das klassische Altertum*, 1902, p. 241.

to the "educated" amongst those who rejected it, the expression "educated" signified far more than it would have done after the disintegrating effect of the century which has since elapsed. Since his time literary work has yielded up to other forces its one-time leadership of life, and this has had the effect of lowering the concept of education which was based upon this work. In addition to this the prodigious progress of science in the nineteenth century has had its effect; under its influence, it was more particularly the extent of knowledge which seemed decisive, not only with regard to social position, but with regard to the whole value of man, and there naturally resulted from this an effort to communicate as much knowledge as possible to the widest possible circle.

And this is the point at which there is need for an energetic self-recollection and deepening in the interests of a true ideal of an education for the people. Science and art are certainly the chief means for arousing spiritual life, but it makes an immense difference whether they are to do this directly through their own capacity or whether they are related to a spiritual life as a whole, being thereby deepened and strengthened and directed towards a definite goal. A truly human and popular education must demand the latter. The task is, through that which we bring to man, to arouse him to self-active life and to base him firmly upon this; it is necessary to make clear to him the sharp *either—or* which is contained in human existence, to call him, through a great reversal of direction, to inner independence, to firmness and joyfulness in his own being; it is essential, further, to let him recognise the greatness and dignity of man in his spiritual nature, and at the same time his limits and the great gulf that separates him from the goal, to give him a consciousness of the inward greatness and importance of even the simplest situation in life or the most modest outward sphere of duty, and to fill him with a powerful faith in life, fit to fortify him against every obstacle and reverse. Life must effect the development of a core, from which there proceeds an inner motive force, and everything communicated to man from without must be linked up with this force. Everything that is not in some way able to call forth our own activity, our own movement, our own experience, may be omitted

without danger. With this direction towards the core there will develop a right valuation of the goods of human life ; on the one hand we shall awake to deep reverence for the true goods, the goods of feeling and conviction, and on the other, we shall become liberated from the values of the sham and pretence wherewith the superficial culture of conventional social life is wont to conceal its own emptiness. The conviction must be aroused in every man, that he, in his place, has the duty of representing the spiritual world, and that, by labouring at his own life and those of others, he can increase the content of this world. Further, such an establishment in our own spiritual being provides us with an unerring touchstone whereby we may distinguish what is genuine from what is not, what is deep from what is superficial, and saves us from sinking to that inner defencelessness, that will-less floating hither and thither upon the surface currents of the age, which is to-day characteristic of so many men and women. It is a question of a life lived from within, a life that, in itself, develops a content, and, in itself, bears a value, a life that, even in outwardly narrow circumstances, possesses a cosmic character, a life that is full of joyful, living courage, and a firm vital faith that nothing can destroy. In all the many different branches of our efforts to realise an education for the people our eyes must be kept constantly fixed upon the strengthening of this life.

To-day, in particular, an ever-increasing force is urging us in this direction. For a hollow and pretentious life has grown up in our midst with appalling rapidity, and threatens, with bold and insolent self-assertion, to choke all true life; while, looked at from the standpoint of the inner man and of man as a whole, our civilisation shows many signs of old age. Its spiritual creative work is stagnant; and it is overwrought and super-refined. Our true spiritual development is forced into the background by the petty human routine of life; so that we are threatened with a deterioration to a burlesque of civilisation. We urgently need a rejuvenation of life, a regeneration of our civilisation. And this can take place in one way only—through a return to the original sources of life, through a more energetic working out of its simple and essential elements. The great spiritual renewals

of mankind have, at bottom, always been simplifications, (as we see more particularly in the history of the religions)—movements away from the artificiality and perversion of the prevailing human circumstances towards the simplicity of true spirituality, the true self-dependence of life. We must consider the education of the people, too, from this standpoint, for thus alone can we sketch an ideal of popular education that shall be equal to the tasks and superior to the complications of the present day. Thus regarded, it cannot be denied that the matter appears in the highest degree difficult, but we cannot doubt of its necessity. And as Goethe said, necessity is the best of all counsellors.

And finally if we Germans do not find ourselves, to-day, in a fortunate position with regard to these fundamental questions of the inner life, if negation and superficiality are tending to drag us down, if our faith in life grows uncertain and faintness of heart spreads amongst us, we must believe that, in the long run, we shall not be able to deny our own nature, which drives us, with a great compulsion, to constructive work upon the deep things of life, and that we shall escape from the present self-alienation again to find ourselves, and to cut out new paths for humanity. There is certainly no lack of indications of such a forward movement, even at the present time.

A CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRESENT DAY

VIII

A CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRESENT DAY*

This book†—which we hope will attract the attention of a large public—is a work of rich intellectual content and great spiritual depth. It is the life-work of a man who is not only very highly regarded by those who know him, but whose quiet and untiring activity is of conspicuous value to the spiritual life of the day. Baron von Hügel, a man of German nationality, but for family reasons settled in England, has given us his book in the English language. But the spirit which permeates it is not in the slightest degree alien to us Germans; two particular merits of the German character—namely, depth of inner feeling and universality of thought—are here manifested in the happiest fashion, and cause us to regard the work with the greatest sympathy. Baron von Hügel is a fully convinced Roman Catholic, and he assigns not only to the Church as a whole, but also to its governing authorities, a very important position and task in the spiritual development of humanity. But his Catholicism, which was moulded, in the first place, under the influence of Newman, is free from all narrowness and exclusiveness; with an unshakable firmness of fundamental conviction, he unites an eager endeavour to take to himself and use for his own purposes everything good and great that is anywhere to be found. Although this work is far removed from every kind of

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† Baron Fr. v. Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*: as studied in St. Catherine of Genoa and her Friends. Vol. i. Introd. and Biogs.: Vol. ii. Crit. Studies. J. M. Dent, 1908.

polemical discussion, it is important, for its right understanding, to know that the author participates bravely and definitely in the ecclesiastical conflicts of the present day, that, with his deep religious feeling, he stands upon the side of the modernists, and that the unhappily deceased Tyrrell was an intimate friend of his. The whole work is inspired by the spirit of the mottoes which precede it: He is "not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts xvii. 27–8): and "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. iii. 17). Freedom and depth, the usual mutual hostility of which is so injurious to our own age, are here brought into complete harmony and fruitful interaction.

The peculiar character of this work is already revealed by the title, with its reference to the intertwining of historical investigation and philosophical discussion. The author was attracted, in the first place, by the life-story of a woman recognised by the Catholic Church as a saint, but his careful study brought up many questions of principle, and in the course of the work these developed so much independence that the philosophical discussion more and more became the principal matter. Such an association of the historical and the philosophical may at first sight appear odd, but it receives its justification through the general construction of the work. Of indisputable advantage, at any rate, is the fact that, in this case, the historical representation possesses a basis of philosophical conviction; while the philosophical discussion is warmed and strengthened by its relationship to an individual life-story.

The author was impelled by a variety of motives to undertake a detailed study of Catherine of Genoa [1447–1510]; he was attracted both by the nature of the age as a whole and by the character of this particular individual. As he explains in the preface, he was sympathetically affected by the religious life of an age which had grown out of the Middle Ages and attacked the great problems of life with fresh power, without, at the same time, being divided and hindered in the full spontaneity of its spiritual life by the antithesis of Protestantism and neo-Trentian Catholicism. And Catherine, who has been honoured for centuries by so many distinguished personalities of various

types, attracted him in a peculiar degree, by reason of the deep inwardness, originality, spontaneity and independence of her spiritual life; he found in her a particularly conspicuous embodiment of the two fundamental ideas of all true mysticism, the immediate presence of infinite life in the human soul, and the necessity of a continual self-denial, an ascent to heights through difficult conflicts and sufferings. The author is by no means oblivious to the fact that Catherine's natural disposition and temperament had definite limitations, and that many peculiarities, that were regarded as miraculous by those about her, seem to-day rather repulsive than attractive. But such limitations do not affect the core of her being and activity. On the scientific side, Baron von Hügel's task was of an exceedingly difficult description, because there was as yet no critical study of Catherine's life and teaching; it was necessary, with the greatest labour, first of all to gain a definite basis and to bring order into an immense chaos. The author had to draw upon much unpublished material and there was need for great care and anxious consideration in order adequately to review and to sift the existing accounts of Catherine's life and the material that has been collected together from her expressions as representing her teaching. The author has, however, succeeded in piecing together the separate fragments to make a whole, thus creating a distinct picture of this remarkable personality, of this "soul with a very rare spiritual depth," this "soul which with extraordinary vividness represents the greatness, the sources of power, the problems and the dangers of the mystical spirit." Catherine of Genoa cannot, however, be clearly described without a picture of the circles in which she lived, and in particular of the personalities with whom she had intimate spiritual relationships, and who became, in part, of great significance for the development of her thought-world. Therefore these, too, have received careful consideration.

There is not much to be said with regard to Catherine's outer life. She belonged to the aristocratic house of the Fiesci, her father having been vice-regent of Naples. We know little of her youth; for political reasons she was married at the age of sixteen to a member of the equally distinguished house of

Adorno, Giuliano Jiuliano, who was young and rich, but in no way worthy of her.

Her married life, which was, moreover, childless, gave her but little satisfaction; she felt herself more and more unhappy, until in the twenty-seventh year of her life she experienced an inward illumination that was decisive for the whole of the rest of her life. Her husband, whose fortunes had in the meantime suffered shipwreck, was also won over to the new life, and in 1479 both took up their residence in a hospital in order to devote themselves to the care of the sick and poor. Catherine remained there after the death of her husband, in 1490, unwearyingly occupied with tasks of charity until the end of her life. Baron von Hügel endeavours to describe the inner development of her life by means of a most careful sifting and cautious consideration and valuation of the sources; he seeks to mark out different phases in her growth and thus to provide us with an inner history of this remarkable soul. Throughout, we perceive a type of religious life which, although moving within the forms of the Church and never coming into opposition with them, consisted, in its core, of pure inwardness and immediate self-experience, and therefore possessed complete independence. It is true that so far as possible Catherine partook of the Communion every day; but she did not place herself under any spiritual guidance, she did not appeal to the help of the Saints, and she showed no inclination to join a religious order. Thus she was forced to experience the pain of isolation to its fullest extent, and once gave it expression in the complaint: "There is no one who understands me"; but the state of her soul as a whole, and the inner joyfulness of her being, were not thereby in the least disturbed. Religious psychology, which to-day is rightly attracting increasing attention, finds a rich mine of knowledge in the life of Catherine of Genoa.

The author, however, felt himself forced beyond the historical and critical study into a philosophical investigation; for it alone could justify an appreciation of the mysticism which beyond everything else gives value to the life of this personality. "I began to write a biography of St. Catherine, with a few philosophical remarks, and ended by writing a study of the philosophy

of mysticism, as illustrated in the lives of St. Catherine and her friends." Such a philosophy must set before itself the task of investigating the position of mysticism in religion as a whole, of defining it, as compared with other aspects of the latter, and of distinguishing, in its case, what is genuine from what has deteriorated and therefore so easily misleads men in their judgment of it. This, however, led to an investigation of religion itself; and thus we get the outlines of a philosophy of religion, which, although not taking the form of an academic system, affords, through its concentration upon the central problem, far-reaching vistas, and understands how to hold the unflagging attention of the reader. This philosophy of religion has a great style and an admirable universality; it is built upon the basis of a very comprehensive historical and literary knowledge; it is completely saturated with facts and experiences drawn from common life; possessing all the independence and decisiveness of a consistent conviction, yet it holds itself entirely aloof from anything which could be called sectarian; it treats the problem throughout as the concern of humanity as a whole and not of any party. It could not develop such a height and breadth unless it understood and treated religion, not from the standpoint of the mere individual but from that of spiritual life as a whole. But making use of this treatment, it is able to give equal protection to the different sides of religion, to recognise the particular rights of each, while counteracting all isolation and hostility: it can now value each separate thing as part of the whole, and in this way assign to everything its true greatness and its proper limitation.

The introductory discussion already indicates such an endeavour to retain unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity. Three fundamental elements of religion are distinguished. They correspond to the stages of childhood, youth and maturity in individual life; the child grasps religion through sensuous perception and memory, as a piece of social order; the youth in seeking, doubt and investigation; the man in work and creative activity, in personal appropriation; similarly religion has, firstly, the character of outward authority and historical tradition, secondly, that of a world of thought, a philosophy, and finally

that of inner experience and full personality. It is upon the last stage that mysticism is able to develop: now religion becomes, "Rather felt than seen or inferred, rather loved and experienced than analysed; now it is activity far more than outward fact or intellectual demonstration." These three elements appear in the case of the different races, stocks and classes, in different degrees of admixture, as we see, for example, in the contrast between the Latin and Germanic peoples, and there may very easily result hostile feeling between them, and conflict and struggle amongst their followers. But although individuals and groups of individuals may in this way become widely separated, in religion as a whole these elements remain mutually dependent upon one another, each being able to reach its own full development only through co-operation with the others.

That which is thus prefixed by way of basis is further developed and consolidated after the description of the personality in question and her circle has provided us with a clear picture of concrete religious life. It is necessary in the first place to defend the fundamental idea of mysticism—the immediate presence of infinite life in the human soul—against such attacks as are made not only as the result of immature prejudice but even upon the highest levels of spiritual life. Such a conflict must extend in various directions: it directs itself against the equivalence of religion and morality (and at this point it must come to grips more particularly with the work of Kant); it directs itself against the rejection of metaphysics on the part of theology; and finally it directs itself against a too narrow conception of religion, binding the latter solely to a single personality, instead of understanding it as the highest point of a movement which permeates the entire history of the world. Here we perceive, on every hand, an equilibrium of the different efforts to preserve for religion a characteristic spiritual nature and to understand this nature as everywhere present and everywhere active. Thus "Christocentrism" is as decisively rejected as is the positivistic theory of knowledge, with its denial of any direct relationship between man and the infinite.

The problem of evil creates great difficulties for mysticism,

with its affirmation of divine immanence. Mysticism cannot be equal to this difficulty unless it clearly distinguishes between an extreme and exclusive mysticism, and one existing within the wider sphere of religion as a whole: we thus have two forms of mysticism, the "exclusive" and the "inclusive." Thus alone can we find a way between an optimism which fails to recognise the obscurities and depths of human life, and a pessimism which destroys all hope and utterly paralyses man's self-activity. Together with this distinction we need also a distinction between mysticism and pantheism; and this cannot be effected without a careful investigation of the relationship between the general and the particular, the infinite and the finite. We are here provided with an excellent investigation of this description, based upon the co-operation of a very extensive historical knowledge with a profoundly penetrative philosophical method.

The last chapter, which unites the leading ideas of the whole work, gives a detailed discussion of the relationship between science and religion, between intellectual work and religious conviction. In this task different levels of the life-movement are distinguished from one another, although, in the interests of the whole, each of these must be autonomous with respect to the others. Science, in the strict sense of the word, has to deal with the impersonal elements of life, to represent objective fact and law; this task is indispensable if the mere individual, with all the petty human weaknesses which cling to him, is to be raised to the level of spiritual personality, of participation in the infinite life. Since we are in such a position that our life moves between the visible and actual, on the one hand, and the spiritual and infinite, on the other, each of these sides must be recognised and duly valued.

The concluding remarks take us back to the thoughts with which the work began. At the end of the wide and deep investigation it becomes possible to show, in the most powerful and impressive fashion, that the three chief elements of religion must be independent with regard to one another, nay that they are to a certain extent even antithetical; and that the most serious dangers result if one of these, suppressing the others, attains to exclusive dominion.

An ecclesiastical system is indispensable in view of the accidental and transitory character of the individual life, and the author places in the hands of the leaders of the Church the exclusive right and duty of setting forth normative forms and expressions of the deepest consciousness and spirit of the Church in as far as these become ripe for formulation, to correspond with the consecutive periods in history. If, however, this systematic element, with its demands and institutions, forces back the other elements of religion, there is danger that what is temporal and secondary may attain to absolute validity, and exercise a rigid pressure upon men's minds; religion then takes on a predominantly legal character, inner movements are expected to result from outward pressure, mere institutions take precedence of conviction, and the priest forces the prophet into the background. The most striking example of this danger is the Spanish Inquisition, but in other communities and other religions there is no lack of unedifying effects consequent upon "institutionalism."

Intellectual work is indispensable for the spiritual character of religion, for the preservation of its breadth and freedom, and for securing the exclusion of all superstition. But if knowledge becomes the chief thing in religion, then the latter unavoidably becomes dry and cold, nay spiritless. Abstraction and reason now obtain an unduly important position, and by way of reaction we are apt to get a crass agnosticism. The inclination to treat religion predominantly as a cosmic theory runs through the whole of history; mediæval scholasticism was by no means free from this tendency; but in the modern world it has reached a peculiar height.

Although the mystical element forms the vivifying soul of all religion, and even reveals itself outside religion at most points where spiritual creative work has attained originative depth, when isolated and exaggerated, it rapidly leads to formlessness and emptiness; and history bears witness to the fact that, under these circumstances, it gives rise to the most serious confusion, nay disintegration. Here, too, and in fact more particularly here, it is necessary to preserve the relationship between the separate element and the whole. Therefore in re-

lation to mysticism it is of peculiar importance to acquire a clear understanding of personalities whose character and whose life-work have embodied this type of religion, without bringing it into any sort of opposition with their other tasks.

In Catherine of Genoa the author found such a personality; here he saw realised in a historical example the ideal of life indicated by his religious and philosophical conviction. Thus the two sides of his work combine to form a unity.

Let us therefore recommend this work to the interest of all those who desire to be removed from the hurry and restlessness of a life occupied with transitory things and the confusion of party conflict, into a region of contemplation elevated above time, of spiritual inwardness, a region in which the depths of human life are explored. They will find in Baron von Hügel a friend and guide who most profitably combines warmth and kindliness of personal feeling with immense intellectual earnestness, who invariably sees things as a whole, and who has a sound instinct for what is essential. His basic conviction is strong enough to save him from all mere eclecticism and from any compromise with the superficialities of passing opinion; yet it is, at the same time, sufficiently broad and free to recognise the positive element in all things and joyfully to accept a revelation of eternal truth "in different stages and in different ways; in every place and in every age."

THE IMPORTANCE OF GREAT THINKERS

IX

THE IMPORTANCE OF GREAT THINKERS*

Our relationship to the great thinkers involves a problem more difficult than is usually realised.

We are accustomed to mention thinkers and poets in one breath and to think that our attitude towards both should be the same. In reality there exists, in this case, a distinction of no small significance. In the world of the beautiful the same love may very well be extended to different, and even opposite, elements; devotion to the one does not prevent, or even interfere with, devotion to the other. Truth, on the other hand, is intolerant; one answer seems to exclude all the others; one thinker appears to refute the others. Moreover, we cannot approach a given thinker without judging him, without coming to some conclusion with regard to the right and wrong of his doctrine. Such judging, however, will take place according to the convictions which we bring to our consideration of the matter. It would thus seem that, in spite of all supposed development, we remain, fundamentally, contained within ourselves, and in all that we may absorb are in reality strengthening our own specific nature only.

This is assuredly a difficult problem; and it would have to be acknowledged as entirely insoluble, if philosophy rested solely upon the opinions of mere individuals, and if its history were nothing more than a chance succession of such opinions, an ever-changing systematising of reality according to individual character and temperament. It is precisely the great thinkers

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who can teach us that something more than this is in progress; and with the recognition of this more, our relationship to the thinkers will become clearer and more appreciative. The great thinkers exhibit in full clarity the superiority of philosophy over the ordinary routine of life; for the former results in an energetic elevation above the average level and the average method of procedure, not only in the type of thought but also in the feeling which permeates the thought; while in the latter case thought is dominated by rigid presuppositions; it accepts as a matter-of-course the framework of reality in which it finds itself; it feels completely certain of its general tendency, not because it has itself tested it, but because it has already been accepted by its environment. Thus thought remains (in the latter case) in a position of complete dependency, without being in the least conscious of the insecurity of the ground upon which it stands. A liberation from such dependency is a main accomplishment of the great thinkers; in their case thought attains to full independence and full originality, thus revealing a new type of life, with new goals and new standards, a type which must be severely critical towards the established condition of things. A more powerful illumination of our human existence allows us to perceive how many problems are contained in that which passes as secure and inviolable; and since, in the case of the new type of life, the work is taken a stage further back and seeks to explain everything from within, the mysterious and enigmatic elements in our life come to full recognition; nay, it is perceived that the whole is a profound mystery. Such a knowledge, more than anything else, effectively exposes all shallow explanations. We might indeed extend Bacon's saying: "It is true, that a little Philosophy inclineth Man's Minde to Atheisme; but depth in Philosophy, bringeth Men's Mindes about to Religion . . . ," by remarking that philosophy in general, with its enhancement of intellectual activity, in the first place increases the self-consciousness of the individual, and arouses him, more particularly, to opposition; but developed further, and followed more deeply into its complications, awakens a feeling for the depths of reality and, with its revelation of the endless problems of existence, gives

rise to a sense of reverence. Well known is Plato's saying that philosophy springs from wonder. It is this wonder which stimulates the great thinkers; and through it, they lead us into a new relationship to reality. What Goethe said of artistic creation is equally valid as applied to philosophy: "He who does not begin with wonder and admiration, will never find his way into the Holy of Holies." There can be no real philosophy without a vision of the problems.

The feeling, too, which dominates their work, imparts to the great thinkers an elevating and ennobling influence. In his desire for orientation with regard to himself and his life, man is inclined to place in the foreground those questions which directly concern his own well-being; he would like to know how to arrange his life in the easiest and happiest fashion; he seeks a knowledge of his own future, and so forth. Compared with the problem of his own welfare, all other questions are matters of indifference. It is true that the problem of human welfare cannot be thrust aside; the great thinkers, too, must finally come to grips with it. But in its inmost essence, their work involves a liberation from the merely human and the aims of this level; it is capable of effecting an inner purification, for it sets us in the thing itself, and in the development of the latter enables us to place our own welfare in the background, or even to forget it; it occupies us with the width and truth of the things themselves and unites us with the infinity of the whole. All this raises our life above the narrow and uninspired circle of petty human activity into an atmosphere which is essentially more pure. Nor is this reserved for isolated individuals; for wherever life is not liberated from the merely human it becomes empty and superficial.

The influence we have just described is common to the great thinkers in general and precedes their differences. When their work is considered in greater detail it is true that these differences come more to the front and compel us, so it would seem, to choose and decide. Nevertheless, in the case of the leading philosophers, the matter does not come to such a sharp alternative as is often supposed. For upon this level, the work is not so much solely concerned with the clearest possible

explanation of a reality which is exposed to the eyes of all men; it is rather the content of reality itself which stands in question and constitutes the subject of contention. The various thinkers choose different points of departure; they follow different paths; they effect specific syntheses and gradations of the infinite manifoldness. They can do this, however, only in as far as their activity is not merely reflective, but also creative; as creators they possess a specific type of life-process, a specific soul-structure. This it is which enables them to perceive different aspects of the whole, to become discoverers and constructors. It is true that the different achievements, the manifold constructions of life and views of reality, must undergo adjustment within a broader section of life; they cannot possibly merely be packed together. But while it is certain that the development of complete formulæ forces the different convictions to conflict with one another, it is nevertheless quite possible, when the foundations undergo an inner movement and vivification, that the one may complement the other and each can in its own way increase the spiritual possession of humanity, each can open up truth to us.

It is true that no man can be at the same time a Platonist and an Aristotelian. But the Platonist may well recognise that Aristotle's strong tendency towards the world of experience is a valuable complement of Plato's world of ideas; and, conversely, the Aristotelian need not deny that the spiritual permeation of reality, which he so values in Aristotle, has, as its necessary presupposition, the bold thought of Plato's. The logical optimism of Hegel, and the ethical pessimism of Schopenhauer, cannot be directly yoked together; but we may recognise elements of truth in both, and set these in relationship to one another. We must, however, be thoroughly convinced that thought, on its highest levels, is not a mere copying of something external, but is constructive and progressive, thus finding itself confronted with an immeasurable task, the concern of the whole of mankind. In the light of this task, the thinkers no longer appear to be irreconcilably hostile, but rather to be co-workers in the task of struggling for truth, of building up

an independent thought-world in the human realm. The more this work progresses, the more complications come to light, the deeper the problems become, the more an easy solution recedes. In this movement, however, life gains in width, depth and strength; and this alone shows sufficiently well that we are not dealing merely with individual fancy and opinion, but that inner necessities are in control, leading humanity beyond its first stage. The great thinkers, in particular, are able to give us a clear vision of these necessities; thus, in the midst of the struggle, inspiring us with joyful confidence. Even in their differences they are of value to us.

All this involves certain definite requirements with respect to the treatment of the thinkers. How could they be anything to us, if we deliberately refused to be influenced by them? This is the case, however, when, in a matter-of-fact interest in the *what*, we wholly forget the *how*; when we treat the character of their work, the particular manner in which they see, analyse and unite, as an indifferent means. This is the case when we do not push forward to the inner movement which is the soul of the whole, but keep solely to the results, measuring the value of these according to what we ourselves bring to the task as our opinion or hope. Those who treat the thinkers in pedantic fashion, approaching them with fixed questions and distributing praise or blame according to their answers, cannot well learn anything from them. If, to avoid this, we feel it necessary to sink ourselves entirely in the aspiration of the other and sympathetically to experience his necessities as our own, that does not in any sense signify an abandonment of our own specific nature and conviction. No profit whatever could be derived from the relationship of man to man if it were not possible to set one's own nature and opinion in the background, for the time being, without losing oneself, to allow the other person to speak to one inwardly, and to fold his own specific character in its complete purity. This alone permits of the mutual action of souls upon one another, of a fruitful interchange, of a further development of one's own thought and life. The more precisely we grasp the intrinsic nature of the other, the more we can gain from him

for ourselves; for it ever remains true that "individuality calls forth individuality."

Such an aspiration towards a fruitful interchange of life with thinkers understood as far as possible at the vital centre of their creative work, is securely elevated above that subsumption under catchwords, that classification according to party names, which is distinctive of a lower method of treatment. There are still many who think that the matter is settled when they have succeeded in labelling a thinker as an idealist or realist, a monist or dualist, as the case may be; whereas in reality the matter turns upon the more detailed content given to these formulæ by the individuals. The saying of Leibniz that individuality contains an infinity within itself, is peculiarly applicable to the great thinkers. This subsumption and classification is not only indicative of a lack of definite thought; it must bear chief blame for that fanaticism on the part of the sects and schools, which forms such an unedifying chapter in the history of philosophy.

The great thinkers have a right to demand, too, that in their case we should not, in the first place, make a point of discovering contradictions, and think that when these have been ferreted out we may regard the thinker's work as discredited. Many of the supposed contradictions would perhaps disappear if we understood the thinker from within, instead of judging him from isolated doctrines; and even the inharmonious element remaining need not of necessity be attributed to weakness or confusion of thought. Those who make it their business to track down contradictions start with the supposition that reality is a system of purely logical order, not only in itself, but as it presents itself to men. It may, however, be the case that great complications, antitheses and tensions, exist in reality; in which case it is above all necessary that these antitheses should be worked out with full power and clarity, and not weakened from the beginning. The greatest thinkers are not as a rule the smoothest, and those who wish above all things for a comfortable conclusion will do well to leave philosophy alone. This does not mean that we need abandon ourselves to the contradictions. We must

take up the struggle against them and prosecute it with all vigour. But the matter takes on another complexion when we recognise that we are dealing with a problem of humanity as a whole, and cease to attribute everything to elementary errors on the part of individuals.

Thus our relationship to the great thinkers is full of difficulty and danger; and we shall never be able to do more than approximate to them. But so far as we do approach them, and so far as we can succeed in discovering an inner relationship with them and in penetrating to the facts and movements which are decisive in the construction of human life, and so far as we ascend, with their aid, above everyday life and average opinion to a new mode of thought and feeling, we shall joyfully welcome them, even in their diversity, as leaders and promoters of life. That which we may expect to obtain as a result of our occupation with the great thinkers, I may be permitted to express in the closing words of the Introduction to my *Problem of Human Life*:—

"The deep yearning for truth and happiness which breathes from all their writings carries us away by its intensity; and yet there is something magically soothing and strengthening in the mature works into which such yearnings have been crystallised. Different though our own conviction may be, we rejoice none the less in the victories of creative genius, and the transparent lucidity of its productions. Our culture is constantly bringing us into close touch with these master-minds; our work is linked with theirs by a myriad threads. Yet, closely as they concern us, their personality as a whole is often strangely unfamiliar; there may be an utter absence of any real intimacy between us and them. We gaze into the Pantheon from without, but the gods do not descend from their lofty pedestals to share our trials and sorrows, nor do they even seem to be fellow-workers with each other. How different when we turn to the inner sources of their creative activity, when we penetrate to those deep regions of the spirit in which their work reveals itself as the expression and assertion of their true nature. The frozen forms then warm into life and begin to speak to us. We see them impelled by the same problems which determine our own

weal and woe. We also see them linked together as workers in one common task: the task of building up a spiritual world within the realm of human life, of proving our existence to be both spiritual and rational. The walls of division break down at last, and we pass into the Pantheon as into a world that belongs to us, as into our own spiritual home."

THE STATUS OF RELIGION IN GERMANY

X

THE STATUS OF RELIGION IN GERMANY*

All the developments of religion in Germany must of necessity be interesting to other nations also; for Germany is the land of the Reformation and the home of the philosophy of religion, the chief centre of historical investigation and criticism, in religious matters as well as secular. In all that appertains to scientific inquiry within the domain of religion Germany has hitherto maintained the leadership. Great changes have been effected during the nineteenth century, and recently the religious problem has again come very prominently into the foreground.

In order to ascertain the reasons for this state of affairs, it will be necessary to revert to the beginning of the nineteenth century—to the period culminating in poets such as Schiller and Goethe, and in savants such as Kant and Hegel. The relation between this classical era of German literature and the religion of the time was not an unfriendly one. But it was not in the ecclesiastical, or even in the specifically Christian, religion that inward conviction then found expression. Perhaps the term Panentheism, first employed by Krause, best expresses the religious attitude of our classical epoch. Every form of creation appeared to be comprehended in one being, and to be founded in divine wisdom—a wisdom operating everywhere, not from without, but as an emanation of the inmost being of every form of creation; and this wisdom found its fullest expression in the free and rational human organism, *i.e.*, in

* From *The Forum* (U.S.A.), December, 1901.

man. The conception and development of this idea operated on every hand as an invigorating and ennobling factor. In the midst of our temporal existence religion disclosed to view an infinite perspective, and brought human nature into relation with the invisible, but endless, chain of existence. Such a religion could afford to dispense with dogmas and ceremonies. It recognised no differences of creed, but appealed directly to man as such. It scorned to assume any particular form, in order that it might avoid limitations and preserve its influence unimpaired.

This religion of a universal humanity found a marvellous expression in the works of our great poets, notably in those of Goethe, and in this form it has exerted its influence to the present day. Yet it was, after all, only the handmaid of intellectual labours which culminated in science and art. It did not attain the independence peculiar to other departments; it was a mental attribute of the individual rather than a power in public affairs, and displayed no desire or aptitude for organisation. Despite the breadth of ideas and refinement of sentiment peculiar to it, this religion occupied no place in the public life. Hence it was that within a very wide circle there existed a positive apathy as regards religion, which was looked upon as essential to the ignorant only. Indeed, it was generally believed that in course of time religion would be supplanted by culture.

The first decades of the nineteenth century already show a tendency toward the strengthening of religion. Romanticism makes its appearance in literature, and with it we may note an increased appreciation of history. The gaze reverts to the past and seeks to grasp the relation between it and contemporary life. A similar phenomenon is noticeable in religion. Here also historical tradition is restored to its former status, and finds a wide acceptance. A far more powerful factor of change, however, must be sought in the actual experiences of life. The Napoleonic wars were fraught with dire calamity to Germany; and only after Herculean efforts on the part of the nation was it possible eventually to throw off the foreign yoke. Amid the sufferings and sacrifices entailed, the tone of the nation became

graver, and there arose a greater susceptibility to religion in the older sense—religion conceived as a redemption from need and misery by means of a supernatural agency. These influences could not, however, permanently affect and control the national life; and it was within the pale of the church itself that there now arose an even stronger tendency to return to the simple forms of Christianity, as transmitted by tradition, and to the older doctrines.

The majority of educated persons could not, of course, participate in this movement, which would have necessitated a renunciation of the splendid ideas advanced by the great German poets and savants. The circumstance that this orthodox movement nevertheless gained ground during the nineteenth century, and acquired considerable influence, is due largely to the fact that it was supported and favoured by the political administration. After the wars of liberation there arose between the German Governments and the people a schism which manifested itself also within the domain of religion. As a result of the wars of liberation the German people regained not only their political, but also to a large extent their personal, independence. It was natural, therefore, that they should now evince a desire to participate more actively in political affairs. The sense of national unity had also been awakened, and the nation perceived the utility of concerted action. In this way the movement towards national unity was inaugurated. With respect to this movement the various Governments preserved a repellent, if not an inimical, attitude, being inclined to support every effort tending toward a maintenance of the existing order.

Now it is well known that the Protestant churches of Germany enjoy the support of the Government, and that by reason of this co-operation with the state they exert a great influence upon education and culture. It was natural, therefore, that a policy aiming at the maintenance of the *status quo* should favour in religious affairs the tendency to reject all innovations. Furthermore, it is evident that the support thus given to the church was not likely to win the favourable opinion of those who had participated in the great intellectual and political movements of the time. By these not only the church, but every

form of religion, had now come to be regarded as a hindrance to the realisation of the political and national ideas, and as part and parcel of what was usually embraced in the term "reaction." True, there were many who kept in view the difference between religion, in the wider sense, and ecclesiastical forms, and there were also many vigorous protests against the favouritism shown to particular creeds on the part of the state. But the fact remains that the influence of religion upon public life waned, and that an increasing apathy, if not an actual antipathy to all religion, gradually spread within the educated circles of the nation. Literature also assumed a repellent attitude, if not toward religion, at least toward the church; and the representation of religious subjects vanished almost entirely from the domain of the fine arts.

The last three decades of the nineteenth century, however, witnessed a complete revolution of religious sentiment. Of course, religion still has numerous opponents, and there are also many who have maintained an attitude of complete indifference toward religious matters. Yet, upon the whole, the interest in religion is far more marked than formerly, and the problems involved in it are more frequently discussed. That the influence of religion is increasing is noticeable in both the Protestant and the Catholic churches. There is a greater solidarity among the members of these respective denominations, and the contrasts between them are at present far more strongly accentuated than at the beginning of the nineteenth century. But the growth of religious sentiment extends beyond the pale of the church; and wherever opposition to ecclesiastical domination exists, it springs not so much from antipathy to the true interests of religion, as from a solicitude for them. Philosophy, formerly inimical to theology, is now jealously endeavouring to treat religion upon a scientific basis, and to make it an essential part of general culture. The arts, more especially painting, seek to represent the noble figures of tradition in accordance with the modern spirit; and literature also affords far more space to the discussion of religious problems.

In short, all that appertains to the subject is fraught with an intense and all-absorbing interest. The national conflicts of the

Germans in Austria were followed with complete passivity by the majority of Germans in the Empire; but as soon as the religious element became involved and there was heard the watchword "Los von Rom," the interest in the movement became universal. The spirit of scepticism in religious matters has continued to permeate the masses; but the deeper religious movement, nevertheless, continues unimpaired. The spirit of denial, once directed against religion, is to-day rapidly waning in Germany. It no longer dominates the intellectual life, nor does it constitute the characteristic of our age.*

How may we explain this marvellous transformation in the midst of so much intellectual activity? Undoubtedly, external influences have largely contributed to it. In the first place, the increased political influence of the masses is favourable to religion, or at least to the domination of the church. In the legislative bodies of the various German states, *i.e.*, in the "Landtagen," or national assemblies, the property-holding and educated classes predominated because of the fact that the suffrage was—as it still is in many instances—restricted in a greater or lesser degree to a property qualification. The constitution of the German Empire, on the other hand, guaranteed universal suffrage upon the broadest basis. The consequent shifting of the political centre of gravity came gradually, of course: but it came. An increase of ecclesiastical power was naturally effected first and foremost in the Catholic church, the adherents of which are less influenced by modern ideas; and the spirit of scepticism came more immediately under the influence of the hierarchy.

Several other circumstances contributed to this development. In the German Confederation of 1866, as formerly in the Holy Roman Empire, the Catholic and Protestant elements were perfectly balanced; and the equilibrium was further promoted by the circumstance that Austria was Catholic, while Prussia was Protestant. With the elimination of Austria from the Confederation the Protestants obtained a decided preponderance

* *Edit. Note.*—During the thirteen years that have elapsed since this article was written, the revival of religious interest in Germany has become much more marked.

—in the present German Empire the Protestants constitute 63 per cent., and the Catholics 36 per cent., of the population—and the leadership in the German Empire was permanently relegated to a dynasty of time-honoured Protestant antecedents. This fact alone would have sufficed to give rise to uneasiness among Catholics, even if complications between the state and the Catholic church had not ensued during the first decade of the existence of the New Empire. The decree announcing the infallibility of the Pope, issued in 1870, created considerable excitement in Germany. It served to accentuate the contrasts between Catholicism and Protestantism, and encountered resistance even among an intelligent minority of Catholics. The complications which followed arose from a desire, particularly on the part of Prussia, to guard this minority against persecution.

The agitation spread rapidly. In 1872 Prussia enacted a number of laws aiming to augment the power of the state in contradistinction to that of the church, and, above all, to withdraw the schools from the influence of the latter, so that even the clergy were to receive a national education, while the lower ranks of the priesthood were to be independent of the bishops. The substance of these laws is in accordance with modern culture, and the personal motives of the statesmen who framed them were certainly the best. But the manner in which they were framed and carried into effect was less fortunately conceived. Penalties and police regulations were devised which interfered with the ecclesiastical life, and thus contributed to unite all the adherents of the church in a common defence. These ordinances of the state were characterised by an inability to appreciate the factors which are influential in matters of religion; in other words, they revealed an ignorance of the psychology of religion.

The results produced were exactly contrary to those intended. Nothing ever contributed more to increase the power of the church and to strengthen its sense of solidarity than did these unskilful attacks on the part of the state. The obstinate resistance of the church could not be broken; the number of Catholic deputies to the Reichstag steadily increased; while their party,

the so-called "Centre," derived strength from the factional spirit which up to the present day has characterised the other elements of that assembly. For many years the Centre men have been the strongest party in the Reichstag. Amid these conditions the laws in question could not endure, and with few exceptions they have been gradually repealed. But Catholicism became a political power in Germany, and as such its influence extended to other departments.

This development of power naturally occasioned some apprehension among Protestants, and in order to forestall possible usurpations a number of prominent men formed the Evangelical Union. That the spirit of Protestantism has been aroused is evident from the newly awakened interest in the Reformation and in the personality of Luther. All this is, of course, conducive primarily to an increase of ecclesiastical power rather than of religious sentiment in the deeper sense. On the other hand, religious problems have been again revived. Another noteworthy fact is the frequent conversion of Catholics to Protestantism, and *vice versa*. In this respect Protestantism has the advantage and has been particularly favoured by reason of the frequency of mixed marriages.

This growth on the part of the churches would not have been possible, however, without the co-operation of other factors. One of these must be sought in the increased activity of the church in the sphere of practical life. The great revolutions in labour, the advance in the departments of mechanics and industry, the extension of factories, the rapid growth of German cities, more especially since 1870—all these circumstances have created a number of new problems with which individuals alone were incapable of grappling, and which demanded thorough organisation. In this respect much has been accomplished in Germany by the state. Nevertheless, its activity still allowed the church a wide sphere of usefulness in tending the sick and providing for the indigent; and even orthodoxy came to be regarded more favourably by reason of the earnestness and zeal which it displayed. While the practical side of religion was thus more strongly emphasised, the position of the church was also rendered more secure, and individuals whose

views were widely divergent found here a fruitful field for co-operation.

Another factor which contributed to strengthen religion was the radical change effected in convictions and sentiments. The political and national aims which had dominated the middle of the century had in the main been realised. The former disunion between the states had been succeeded by a powerful and progressive empire. But, as frequently happens in human life, the attainment of these ambitions soon revealed their numerous limitations. During the struggle for national unity large sections of the population were inspired by the conviction that a new and nobler life would begin upon the formation of the empire. But it soon became obvious that the outward successes which had been achieved had contributed nothing to the spiritual or inner life. Furthermore, a reaction against the ideals of modern culture now manifests itself among all civilised nations, and nowhere more conspicuously than in Germany. The new culture, as developed more particularly during the nineteenth century, endeavoured to stimulate the powers of man and to give him a dominion over the forces of nature. To this extent it exerted an incalculable influence, and endowed life with greater variety, freedom, and mobility. At no previous period of history have the labours of man been exerted so successfully and upon so rich a field. Yet this has not always conduced to our inward welfare and to our happiness. The nineteenth century has frequently employed man as a mere tool of labour—a labour the ceaseless onward movement of which leaves no time for contemplation and quiet enjoyment. Inward culture, also, has been retarded in consequence of our incessant search for outward successes. As soon as these defects became clearly visible, a pessimistic view of life naturally arose; and it is well known how widespread this spirit has become to-day among all civilised nations.

Now, although pessimism is not itself a phase of religion, it tends to destroy that complacency which is a dangerous foe of religion, thus preparing the way for the progress of the latter. The disappointments which the development of modern culture has produced have been instrumental in again awakening a

susceptibility to religious influences. The great and complicated enterprises of our time also frequently reveal a painful absence of moral ideals; and herein lies still another reason for the greater prominence at present given to problems of morality. In Germany, as well as in other countries, a great change of conviction has been effected in this respect. Both the former epochs of German culture, the literary as well as the politico-national, treated the problem of morality optimistically; both believed that the necessary moral strength would arise immediately from the actual labour of life; and both anticipated no difficult complications in this regard. Now, however, the moral problem has again arisen independently; and it has been demonstrated that the task of enlisting humanity in the cause of the truly good and great is not an easy one. Ethical training has again become imperative. Many hope for a strengthening of the moral nature by entirely dissolving the union between the latter and religion; while a far greater number, in Germany at least, expect good results only from a revival and a reformation of religion.

Thus, both outward and inward causes combine in Germany to bring the problem of religion once more prominently into the foreground. But for the very reason that religion is now no longer regarded as a matter of tradition, as at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but as a vital and pressing mission, the traditional dogmas are beginning to be felt as painfully inadequate. This is true particularly in the case of the Protestant church, which still maintains the character of a Government institution, and as such appears rather to obstruct and to damage than to advance the true interests of religion. A close union between church and state may be appropriate where the conviction of the whole people centres in one common faith, and where no doubts or discords exist as to the essence of the creed. Where, however, powerful contrasts exist, and a new form arises and demands recognition, discords are sure to ensue when the state, which should protect the common interests of all, endeavours to champion a particular sect. This happens when the state clings to ancient traditions while great changes are arising and new tasks are being presented. Even to

the older form of religion such favouritism on the part of the state is detrimental, for the reasons that the self-reliance of the creed is impaired and that its followers are often actuated by considerations of personal advantage. In this way, infidelity and deception are apt to be introduced into religious matters. Finally, it is a hindrance to normal development when the state gives greater prominence to any particular tendency than such tendency possesses in the conviction of the people and in the labours of science.

Now, it would seem likely that, in consequence of these palpable defects in the state religion, independent religious communities would arise. Externally there would be no obstacle to the formation of such organisations; for nobody is compelled to remain a member of the Government church. Why then do even those who painfully experience the shortcomings of their creed remain within this church? Because the new principles are as yet too ill-defined to afford strong convictions and common aims. The religious question in Germany is greatly complicated by the fact that those who seek to preserve the traditional form in the midst of modern culture have no prospect of regaining the leadership of the nation, while those who seek to hold a modification of this form of religion, without sacrificing their culture, encounter insuperable difficulties in fixing the exact ideal toward which they are aiming. This uncertainty and incompleteness constitute the strongest support of the older order, which, despite its imperfections, is invincible as long as the above-mentioned conditions remain.

Let us investigate the difficulties that confront the new idea in religion. The pantheistic and optimistic views of life peculiar to the classical era have become somewhat unfamiliar to the German of to-day; but the desire, inherent in this philosophy and its great exponents, to establish a basis for religion within the soul of the individual, and to keep in touch with other spheres of activity, still remains. But will it be possible to preserve this striving for universality as a characteristic of religion? And can a religion which does not possess a distinctive and exclusive character, one which is not, so to speak,

a matter apart, exert a potent influence upon life? Is it possible to unite religion with general culture in such a way that it will still preserve its independent character? During the nineteenth century a historical mode of investigation rapidly gained ground in Germany. Long before the theory of evolution had been introduced into the physical sciences, it had taken firm root in the purely intellectual spheres of scientific activity, and had thus exercised a powerful influence on religion. In this way, religion, also, was drawn into the great current of historical evolution, and its highest and noblest doctrines appeared as a part of the general development. At the same time there was applied to it a critical method of investigation which sought to illuminate tradition, to point out contrasts and discrepancies, to distinguish between earlier and later writings, and to disclose as gradual human inventions statements which had long been regarded as divine and eternal truths.

Within the last few decades this historical method of inquiry has inflicted more serious damage upon the finally accepted doctrines of tradition than ever resulted from the speculations of philosophy; and even orthodoxy has been forced to make concessions to the modern spirit herein exhibited. More important than the actual results achieved is the fact that it has become possible to subject to critical discussion matters long regarded as absolutely certain and inviolable. The situation may well give rise to serious doubts. Will religion, while recognising a progressive development, be able to preserve its eternal nature, and succeed in warding off a destructive relativism? Will historic criticism permit to remain intact those fundamental truths without which a religion is inconceivable? How great a task is here assigned to modern Christianity, which must undertake to clarify, to confirm, and to deepen new truths in order to present to humanity a tangible creed!

The relation of religion to the natural sciences also presents serious difficulties. The infinitude of the universe, the eternal laws which operate throughout nature, the natural evolution from organic forms, the dependence of the spiritual upon the

corporeal existence—all these truths are rapidly spreading; and they are nowhere more frequently employed as controversial arguments by the adversaries of religion than in Germany. The faithful, on the other hand, maintain that these changes do not affect the kernel of religion, and that, by presenting a larger and grander view of life, they will in fact ultimately conduce to its progress. Nevertheless, the problem has become far more complicated; and great changes, both material and spiritual, will be necessary, in order that the new truths may be scientifically defensible and may carry with them a spiritual power of conviction.

The internal condition of religion is, therefore, in a state of incompleteness; and there are no indications of a speedy solution of the problems involved. But an earnest desire to effect such a solution is unmistakable, particularly as regards the theologians, who are conscientiously striving to bring about a compromise between the demands of religion and the essential truths of the new culture.

Despite these conflicts, both within and without the sphere of the church, it cannot be denied that religion, to-day, is a very powerful factor in German life. It is peculiar to the German to give particular emphasis to the emotional, the purely spiritual, element in religion—an element which opens a domain free from all doubt and speculation, one into which the individual may at all times withdraw to become conscious of an everlasting truth. Owing to the low estimate placed by the German on outward forms, the superficial observer may well be inclined to regard him as irreligious. A deeper insight however, reveals great earnestness and zeal, particularly in religious matters. The German papers recently published an expression of opinion on this subject by Bishop Bonemelli of Cremona, who, as chief pastor of the Italian workmen in Germany, has had excellent opportunities of comparing the religious conditions of that country with those of its neighbours. He lauds the earnestness of the divine service among both the Catholics and the Protestants of Germany, and in conclusion remarks that "the religious sentiment of the German people is deeper and more enduring than that of France, and far more

powerful than that of Italy." Such is the opinion of a Catholic bishop on the relation of the various nations to religion.

With the Germans, religion is not a matter of mere authority; nor does it constitute a separate and exclusive domain, inasmuch as it is regarded as the sole, the spiritual, essence of all life. This is the reason why the German places so much value upon freedom in religion, and why Germany became the land of the Reformation. But Catholicism also is deeper and more spiritual in Germany than among the Latin nations. True, the desire for freedom is undoubtedly fraught with serious dangers, as it may easily lead to insubstantiality and schism. Yet this desire, after all, is but the expression of an earnest striving for truth. The great deeds formerly accomplished by the Germans on behalf of religion justify the hope that the nation will eventually solve the present problem, and that it will succeed in uniting liberal ideas with true spiritual zeal, thus conducing not only to its own welfare, but to that of humanity at large.

ARE THE GERMANS STILL THINKERS?

XI

ARE THE GERMANS STILL THINKERS?*

It is a well-known fact that Bulwer very amiably dedicated his novel *Ernest Maltravers* to "the great German people, a nation of thinkers and of critics." Here, probably, we have a principal source of a designation which has now become general. The idea, however, goes back much further. Probably nothing has done more to spread among the Western nations the conception of the Germans as a people of pronounced literary and philosophical tendencies than Madame de Staël's book *De l'Allemagne*.

In the early years of this century Madame de Staël travelled through Germany. She associated with prominent persons, and remained for some time in Weimar and Berlin. Her impressions of Germany, (*i.e.*, Germany as it existed before the battle of Jena (1806),) were recorded in the aforesaid work, which, owing partly to the keenness of insight and the wealth of ideas which characterised it, and partly to the bitter hatred and relentless persecution of Napoleon I, soon excited widespread attention. In this book Germany and the Northern lands bordering upon it are called the "country of thought." The Germans are described as a people distinguished for reflection and meditation, and anxious to comprehend all things. They are great in abstract studies, and may be not inaptly termed the metaphysical nation *par excellence*. They regard literature as of paramount importance, and literary production as the highest form of activity. They are admirable in the strength of their inner convictions and in the patience and power of endurance dis-

* From *The Forum* (U.S.A.), January, 1899.

played in carrying those convictions into effect. They take deeper interest in ideas than in events. Their universality of thought enables them to feel at home among all peoples of all periods. At the same time, their literature and philosophy reveal a wealth of individuality unequalled by any other people of modern times. With such achievements, they stand at the head of the intellectual life of Europe.

But these advantages, according to Madame de Staël, are accompanied by serious defects. The Germans lack the energy requisite for action; in the domain of practical life they are utterly without that universality which characterises their literary productions. Here they appear unskilful, petty, slow, and inert; everywhere they encounter difficulties; and nowhere else do we so frequently hear the expression "It is impossible." Owing to their faculty of assimilating what is foreign, and to their unremitting association with abstract ideas, they are in danger of remaining strangers to the spirit of the century and of losing sight of the present and the actual—a domain of which the French have, in consequence, possessed themselves. They lack that practical training in life by which the character becomes steeled and fortified for a vigorous resistance against attacks from without. Thus Jean Paul Richter, one of their greatest writers, justly says that "the empire of the sea belongs to the English, that of the land to the French, and that of the air to the Germans."

Despite the recognition of such defects, however, Madame de Staël is firm in her appreciation of the German people. To her, they are admirable by reason of their indefatigable activity on behalf of the intellectual development of humanity, and because of their valuable contributions to the enrichment and deepening of life.

Such is the picture of the Germans as revealed at the beginning of this century. How great the change effected since then! For now, at the close of the nineteenth century, the Germans appear particularly great, by reason of their military organisation, the energy and skill displayed in their work, and their restless advance in the technical, industrial, and mercantile domains. The Germans to-day appear to be entirely absorbed

in the actual life of the present; the cultivation of belles-lettres now plays a very modest rôle; and the majority of persons among the educated classes are quite unwilling to indulge in philosophical speculations. How can so complete a revolution be satisfactorily explained? Have the Germans entirely divested themselves of their former inclinations? Have they ceased in every sense to be a "nation of thinkers"? Or may this change be attributed to their versatility? Is it possible that they have been equipped by nature with various tendencies, each of which in the course of history occasionally obtains a preponderant influence? At all events, a fascinating problem is here presented, a solution of which is not only indispensable to a proper appreciation of German nature and life, but may possibly prove conducive to a more correct understanding of the political and intellectual situation of the present day.

The condition of Germany described by Madame de Staël was the result of a peculiar historical process. Among the Germans the modern spirit rose at a somewhat later period than among the other cultured nations of Europe. In the sixteenth century, religious problems absorbed all interest; while the first half of the seventeenth century brought that disastrous Thirty Years' War, which robbed Germany of the greater part of her population, barbarised her manners, and destroyed her prosperity. It is a strong proof of their elasticity of nature that in the first half of the eighteenth century the German people had already begun to manifest an earnest desire for intellectual emancipation and for an active participation in modern culture.

But this new vital impulse found in the political and social conditions of the time no suitable object. Germany was split up into hundreds of ridiculously diminutive states that regarded each other with jealousy and disfavour. The development of industry and commerce was retarded by a multitude of difficulties; and all commercial enterprises suffered from the meagreness of the financial resources. In all these external affairs the conditions at that time prevailing were petty and circumscribed. Nowhere was there room for the development of a

political and national life on a large scale. In consequence of this, the impulse of life, repelled by the outer world, devoted itself exclusively to the speculative philosophy concerning the universe, and to the development of the internal culture of man.

In this way, the formation of a community of intellect was rendered possible. The Germans created for themselves in literature a special empire of their own—a republic of scholars and the cultured generally—which enabled them to rise far above the practical and political life, and which emancipated them from the trammels of the material world. Here infinitude lay before them: it was their especial domain. Thus they could without regret dispense with the possession of the material world. So exclusively had the literary and speculative activity at that time entered into the life of Germany, that Madame de Staël could truthfully say, "In Germany a man who is not occupied with the comprehension of the universe has really nothing to do." Amid the contemplation of the universe, and the artistic creations it inspired, the Germans felt happy and secure until the thunders of the Battle of Jena and the demolition of the entire national order terrorised them out of their sense of security and contentment.

This peculiar situation was vividly described by the gifted authoress; and the picture presented by her must be acknowledged as truthful. Nevertheless, it has one serious defect: it depicts merely a temporary situation, and claims to represent as a permanent and distinguishing characteristic of the German people what in reality was a particular and evanescent condition only. That such is the true aspect of the case may be demonstrated by a brief survey of the earlier history of the German people.

Not until the Reformation did Germany acquire a leading position in the intellectual life of Europe. During the Middle Ages she was indeed somewhat behind other nations in scientific and literary matters. At that time Paris was the undisputed centre of culture. This truth was then well expressed in the saying that God had given the priesthood to the Italians, worldly dominion to the Germans, but that He had entrusted the culti-

vation of the sciences to the French. In those days there were far more German students at foreign universities than foreign students at German universities. Indeed, up to the close of the seventeenth century, we may hear among foreign nations voices which deny the title of the Germans to intellectuality and originality in literary matters, and which recognise only their pertinacious diligence and broad scholarship.

On the other hand, it was impossible at that time to dispute the consummate ability of the Germans in all matters pertaining to the practical affairs of life. The military prowess displayed by the Germans when they overthrew the Roman Empire and established the Imperialism of their own nation, survived despite all national division: the profession of arms still exerted a powerful fascination over the people. The burghers of Germany, by dint of their persistent diligence, erected the flourishing cities of the Middle Ages. In these industry and commerce experienced an extraordinary development. That there was also no lack of technical skill is proved by the fact that most of the technical inventions of the latter period of the Middle Ages originated in German cities. In this connection it is only necessary to refer to the art of printing.

The Germans of older date also possessed no mean power of organisation. This is evident from the achievements of the Hanseatic Union, which controlled lands and seas, and imposed its will upon powerful monarchs. It is shown also in the achievements of the Order of the Teutonic Knights, which established in the north-eastern part of Germany an independent realm distinguished by a remarkable system of internal administration. During the Middle Ages the Germans also manifested an extraordinary colonising activity upon their eastern boundaries; and a large part of our present territory was at that time acquired peacefully, and not by force of arms.

At the beginning of the modern era, Germany was probably the wealthiest country of Europe; and English ambassadors render glowing reports of the magnificence of the social conditions prevailing in the cities of the Empire during the sixteenth century. The German people were therefore not originally purely spiritual and unpractical. They are not the

"Hindus of Europe," as they were formerly termed in respect of their classical poets and thinkers. On the contrary, they have, from an early period, manifested great ability and activity both in peace and in war; and they have become what they are, not by the favour of nature, but by reason of their own exertions. Energetic labour and pleasure in it are inseparable adjuncts of their being. It is, therefore, no sudden phenomenon, but a reawakening of their ancient deeply rooted nature, if we now see them once more vigorously advancing in the technical, industrial, and commercial domains; demonstrating a mighty power of expansion, and evincing a desire to participate in the material world—a privilege with which they gladly dispensed during the era of classicism.

Thus it becomes clear that the picture presented by Madame de Staël does not portray the permanent nature of the German people—a nature prominently distinguished by energy and thoroughness, and one whose true impulses could be smothered only for a time.

But we should not correctly understand the Germans and their history, were we to regard them *solely* as a nation devoted to labour. They are distinguished by another feature, which is apparently entirely at variance with the foregoing. From the earliest times the Germans have been characterised by an ardent desire to cultivate the deeper life of the soul, to develop a life entirely apart from the world without, to carefully foster what the German language designates as "*Gemüt*"—an expression untranslatable into any other tongue. The development of this inner life is possible only where individual freedom exists. Consequently it is in accordance with the German spirit to demand free scope for the development of the individual: a subordination to a universal system is regarded as irksome, aye, as intolerable. This is especially noticeable in regard to the great problems of life, which the German desires to solve for himself without a slavish reliance upon mere authority and tradition.

This feature of the German nature already reveals itself in the Middle Ages. It appears in the domain of religion in the form of a profound mysticism; it manifests itself in the fervour

of the lyrical poetry of the period; and it may be recognised in many peculiarities of law, custom, and language. But it is only in modern times that its unmistakable presence and full power have been thoroughly realised. The psychical depth and freedom of German life gave rise to the Reformation; and the Reformation, again, acted as a powerful agency in the development of the inner life itself, greatly extending the influence of this upon every domain.

Through the Reformation, Germany has become the classical land of pedagogy. According to the new religious faith, it was regarded as all-essential to win over the soul of every individual to the recognition of the Sacred Word through full conviction of its truth. Consequently it became a sacred duty to afford all classes of the population some education—at least in the elementary branches. How seriously this mission was taken in Germany is apparent from the fact that various states—notably Würtemberg and Saxony—inaugurated, as early as the sixteenth century, a carefully graded school organisation; that the first measures toward compulsory school education date back to the gloomy period of the Thirty Years' War; and that normal schools were introduced into Germany in the second half of the seventeenth century.

Probably nothing has contributed more largely to the intellectual supremacy of our country than this early movement in favour of a pedagogical training. At a later day pedagogy became emancipated from theology. Yet the great mission of the science has ever been the development of the inner powers, the cultivation of the soul-life; never a mere outward training for external purposes. And in the solution of this mission lies the greatness of her leaders, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Herbart.

This tendency of the German people toward the development of the inner life manifests itself also in their love and aptitude for music. It was not a mere chance that the greatest hero of the Reformation, the man who, according to Madame de Staël, was distinguished above all his great contemporaries by the most thoroughly German character ("le caractère le plus allemand") should have stood in such close relation to music. It is owing to its close connection with the inner life of the

German people that music is, and will remain, with them the most popular of the arts. Consonantly with this, we find that the *forte* of the German people lies in their lyrics; and their greatest poet, Goethe, is truly classical in this field only. German philosophy also, wherever it has been distinguished by great and characteristic productions, has ever made the inner life a central point from which the observation and comprehension of the actual were to proceed. Such was the philosophical attitude of Leibnitz, Kant, and Hegel; and all deviations from this course in Germany have ever resulted in second-rate productions. It was this aim for the development of the inner nature—an aim the benefits of which had become so obvious—that finally enabled the German, toward the close of the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth, the period of classicism, to construct for himself an inner world from which he might contemplate man in his entirety. This era is comprehensible only as the climax of a long-continued series of efforts.

But in this century also, with its ever-increasing interest in the material world and in practical labour, the influence of that spiritual power of which I have spoken, although concealed and misunderstood, is by no means inactive. The possession of a rich inner life was the basis and the indispensable means of the political and practical revival of Germany. Never would our people have succeeded in attaining such excellent and rapid results in a field neglected by them for centuries, had they not possessed an accumulated fund of spiritual energy and a rich store of intellectual capital. Never would the life of the people have moved forward with such *élan* or manifested such vigorous activity and power of expansion as at present, had not a multitude of small individual centres of culture served to disseminate knowledge among the entire people. The first Napoleon ascribed his downfall primarily to the influence of the German idealists: he well knew what a tremendous influence can be exerted by self-concentrated individuals. Thus we see that the Germany of to-day would have been inconceivable without that of the classical era.

But a close observer cannot fail to perceive that, even in the

midst of the present realism, the ancient principle still exerts its influence upon the nation. It is true that the philosophical views and theories have been pushed farther into the background; but the Germans, unlike other nations, are still incapable of accepting the world without demanding an interpretation of its phenomena as they present themselves. Not philosophy, however, but history, is now the medium of interpretation. Prominent Americans have frequently told me that they regard, as the most striking characteristic of contemporaneous German science, the tendency to treat all subjects historically and genetically—to state carefully the origin of every problem, and trace it through every phase of its development to the present day. Even experiments in physics, they say, are not performed without a historical introduction. Is not this method of treatment also a species of philosophy?

But the direct interest in philosophical and speculative subjects is by no means extinct. Whenever the German is fully possessed of an idea or a mission, he is now, as ever, strongly disposed to construct it into a universal system, a general view of life, aye, into a sort of religion for which he zealously seeks to make converts. Two great examples of this tendency are to-day strikingly manifest. Darwin regarded "Darwinism" primarily as a theory of the physical sciences: the universal problems involved were to him of secondary importance. In Germany, however, the theory was at once converted into the system of "Monism," into a new philosophy, a new universal order.

The Social Movement emanated from England and France. Not until it came to Germany, however, was it taken up by the Social Democracy, and, by a combination of Hegel's doctrines with those of a materialistic nature, formulated into a philosophical system—a system which aims to bring every department of life into accord with its views, and similarly seeks to determine the great problems of the day. Thus, for example, the meetings of the factory-workers in Germany are devoted to a discussion of that portion of the philosophy of history which may be identified with the Social Movement. It is customary

for other nations in dealing with economic questions to leave the philosophy of history out of the matter.

The examples themselves show that the speculative tendency peculiar to the Germans is also fraught with serious dangers. It is apt to lead to rapid generalisations, the result of a one-sided view obtained through familiarity with some particular domain only. It shows an inclination to confine the sum total of actual experience within a narrow system; and it may easily lead to a fanaticism which understands and acknowledges only that which is arrayed beneath its flag. But here also a desire to further the full development of man is unmistakable.

In fact, the German of to-day reveals, in his entire mode of living and in all his aspirations, the same tendency toward contemplation and systematic reasoning which Madame de Staël once designated as characteristic of our people. Where shall we find to-day so strong a desire to generalise, such strife over principles, so much theorising in politics, and so powerful an inclination to speculate upon the present as in Germany? It is harder for the Germans than for other nations to arrive at conclusions concerning the practical questions of life. Each individual obstinately maintains his own opinion and goes forward in his own way. The individualism manifested by the masses prevents voluntary personal subordination as well as a spontaneous combination on their part. It prevents the formation of great parties, and hinders a joyful recognition of great achievements and personalities; for each individual, according to his personal conviction, expects to find deeds and persons somewhat different from what they actually are.

All this is in accordance with the older German principle which we still find active. But it no longer exercises its former sway. It has undoubtedly been pushed into the background by the realistic tendency; and it is this tendency which dominates the German life of the present.

We are now in a position to reply to the question, Are the Germans still a nation of thinkers? This is by no means an easy task, however; for an affirmative answer is equally admissible with a negative one. The Germans are no longer

the nation of thinkers that they were in the days of Schiller and Goethe; speculation and contemplation may not now be said to be their predominant characteristics; and they are no longer content with the purely ideal world. But, in a general sense, they are still a nation of thinkers, inasmuch as nothing is accepted by them which they cannot satisfactorily explain and appropriate as a true inward possession. They wish to be systematic in all their undertakings and to devote to these great mental energy. In the midst of all their practical work, they cannot dispense with their individualism and with the desire for a philosophical view of life.

In the course of our inquiry, however, we have noticed that the nature of the German people is by no means simple, but that it constitutes within itself a powerful contrast and a permanent problem. The Germans have a twofold nature. They are a people of diligent workers, yet characterised by depth of soul. It is necessary for them to establish a certain harmony within themselves, to seek a dominant centre of activity; and, in the course of their history, they are impelled now in one direction and now in another. Thus we see that there is a powerful tension in German life, for this life is difficult to satisfy, and lacks the completeness possessed by other nations. On the other hand, it contains more inward activity, possesses great resources, and is capable of ever assuming new forms.

During the nineteenth century the centre of gravity has been rapidly shifted from one side to the other. At the beginning of the century the spiritual tendency greatly preponderated; while the realistic aspect was as if crippled.

This was the era when the educated German was completely absorbed in the world of poetry and thought; and this condition of affairs was exceedingly comfortable and agreeable to other nations. Germany, by reason of her philosophy and artistic creations, contributed greatly to the general enrichment of life; while, at the same time, she was not a troublesome competitor in the sphere of reality. The favour with which other nations regarded her, however, rapidly declined so soon as they perceived her ability to achieve distinction in the actual world and to

solicit recognition. The nations had become so accustomed to see Germany dispense with these things, that they often actually regarded in her as a serious offence what in others had ever been considered as a self-evident privilege. Surely no fair-minded person would expect to see a great people permanently forego a participation in active life, and willingly become a mere spectator of the drama of history.

Our investigation has shown that if the Germans now manifest greater activity and energy in the practical affairs of life, they owe this to an indestructible impulse of their nature—an impulse which animated them throughout many centuries, and which has now been revived. It is but natural, therefore, that the people who once possessed themselves of the imperial crown of the Roman Empire, and who during the Middle Ages were recognised as the most powerful nation of Europe, should not permanently remain satisfied with the empire of the air.

It is natural that the one-sided spiritual tendency should have been followed by a powerful reaction, and that, for the present, realism should maintain its supremacy among the German people.

But if it is true that our people have never been wholly spiritual, it is equally certain that they will never become purely realistic. They will never be able to give up entirely their search for an ideal inward possession, nor will they become oblivious of their cultural mission. We have seen that, in the very midst of realism, numerous influences of a different nature have been preserved. Still further evidences of this may be adduced. Notwithstanding the rapid growth of material prosperity, the splendid progress in the mechanical and industrial departments, and the great success attending all our national enterprises, the German of to-day feels no inward satisfaction. On the contrary, he is always conscious that something is lacking. Strong pessimistic currents are discernible not only in our literature, but in our national life as well. Is not this a convincing proof that the German of to-day requires something more for his happiness than success and expansion in the outer world? A reaction against pure realism is already in the ascendant. We may confidently expect that

our people will soon again devote more attention to the development of the other side of their nature, that they will once more cultivate art, philosophy and religion on a broad scale, and in this way contribute new treasures to the common fund of humanity. The Germans have not yet exhausted their mental resources. They have not yet finished their part in the drama. Indeed, they have not yet attained the highest destiny to which their peculiar nature entitles them. That destiny consists in overcoming the contrast between soul and labour, and in developing an independent inner life in the midst of a vigorous and fruitful external activity. This task is a burning question and an urgent problem for all civilised nations. The human race is to-day confronted by a serious danger; for labour, constantly increasing in volume, threatens completely to absorb the individual, to crush out all spiritual life, and to make us the mere instruments of a mechanical process of culture, which, at the same time, tends to weaken and to cripple the moral faculties. It devolves upon us all unitedly to guard against so serious a danger, in order that we may maintain our happiness and integrity.

Is it not reasonable to suppose that in this conflict a prominent part should be played by the nation which inaugurated the Reformation, which, as regards literary production and pedagogical training, has ever aimed primarily at the inward development of man, and which has given birth to those great classicists whose works may be likened to an inexhaustible fountain, or to a veritable spiritual world of infinite depth? The German people cannot discontinue their efforts on behalf of a deeper inward culture without denying their historical traditions and sacrificing one of the principal elements of their character. So long as they remain true to themselves, they will hold fast to their ideal and, at the same time,—although in a wider sense—maintain their right to be entitled a "nation of thinkers."

AGAINST PESSIMISM

XII

AGAINST PESSIMISM

As in the life of the individual so also in that of humanity we find waves of optimism and pessimism. At one time our whole activity and creative work is accelerated by a spirit of joy and courage; at another, doubt and discontent blight everything to which we lay our hands. These differences of mood do not arise in the first place from outward circumstances; ages filled with difficulty and trouble, and apparently wild, coarse and joyless, have nevertheless often preserved a feeling of joyful life; while, on the other hand, ages of success and pleasure frequently exhibit paralysing doubt and profound depression. It is clear that the matter is by no means simple, that there are inward complications.

There is to-day a particular reason for studying this question. For it cannot be denied that in the midst of all our restless work and amazing successes there has arisen a pessimistic tendency, which grows ever stronger and stronger; all our brilliant triumphs do not assist us to obtain inward satisfaction and a feeling of joy in life. The very fact that we argue and ponder so much upon the meaning and value of life indicates that the situation is abnormal. We are unmistakably confronted with a problem, and with one that cannot be set aside; for it penetrates too deeply into the situation as a whole and into the state of each individual, too greatly stimulates, and too nearly concerns every one of us. What then, is the source of this depression, so sharply contradicting the outward appearance of our life? It must surely be connected with experiences

* From the *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna), March 26, 1910.

and disappointments which we have encountered in the pursuit of our aims. Let us see how the matter stands.

The nineteenth century saw a great movement away from the invisible world of religious faith, philosophical thought and artistic creation, and towards the things of the visible world, a movement bringing with it the victory of realism over idealism; and our common life is still pursuing this path.

This tendency seemed to clear away a heavy mist which had hitherto concealed from man the real nature of things; a much closer linking-up, nay interweaving, of man and his environment was now effected, and our every undertaking and action gained immensely in power and truthfulness. Now, for the first time, life seemed placed upon a secure basis; while at the same time endless tasks were revealed, the treatment and solution of which opened up limitless prospects. In all this there was expressed a mighty thirst for life, which found ever-increasing nourishment; the complete possession of our immediate existence and the task of shaping it to a kingdom of reason seemed to demand man's whole power and to fulfil his entire desire. This movement penetrated the whole of humanity; it rendered nature subordinate to us, both in an intellectual and in a technical sense; it altered the entire character of our work; in social affairs it banished much that was unjust and irrational; it developed justice and humanity incomparably more strongly than had hitherto been the case; it more and more drew every section of humanity into participation in the tasks and goods of life. These results are so obvious as to need no further comment.

We should have expected, when life became so much richer, more plastic, and more pleasurable, and when unceasing progress was made in every direction, that an overflowing happiness would have filled men's hearts. How does it come about that the very opposite has occurred, that we have become depressed rather than elated? This cannot be satisfactorily explained merely by arguing that what is taken up in youthful enthusiasm usually brings with it certain disappointments, that the resistance is apt to prove greater than was expected, that even in the case of success we do not find all

that we hoped for, that where proud reason seemed to have established itself much that was irrational lay in concealment; all this would explain a certain lowering of our life-feeling, but not a complete reversal. The latter cannot be understood, unless the experiences of life have made our aims themselves uncertain and destroyed our faith in them. And to a very large extent this has taken place.

It has come to pass in this fashion. The powers which the modern life-impulse called into being have to a great extent separated themselves from our control, have come to dominate us, and threaten to direct themselves against us; now a soulless mechanism and now wild human passion endangers the rationality of life and poisons its joy. We have been proud of our modern work, and of the great relationships it has built up, and through which it accomplishes more than was possible in any previous age; but this work has detached itself from humanity and, heedless of man's welfare, has followed its own necessities alone, with the result that it threatens to reduce him to its helpless instrument. We have rejoiced over the greater mobility of life, with its intolerance of any sort of stagnation, but this mobility has become so vehement and life has grown so breathless that all peace and all true enjoyment of the present threaten to vanish. We have boasted of the thoroughgoing liberation accomplished by modern life in a political, social, and national sense; but this liberation has given rise to so much disintegration, so much embitterment, so much passionate hatred between parties, classes, and peoples, that its fruits are beginning to taste bitter. And here, as indeed throughout the whole, we perceive a development and extension of obscure forces to which we do not feel ourselves to be equal. We are painfully conscious of an inner weakness; and life, thus uncontrolled, becomes vacillating and insecure. Under these circumstances, all elevation may seem impossible and all aspiration futile. And this must be all the more oppressive the higher were our hopes, and the stronger the impulse with which the movement began. If modern life in its whole character thus becomes problematical, it nevertheless holds us much too fast for us to turn back

to earlier, simpler, less mobile and less reckless ages; thus the whole outlook becomes clouded over and we can easily understand how it is that in such a situation a dark pessimism should increasingly prevail, and that it should appear impossible to wrest from these obscure forces a meaning and value for our life.

We should not, indeed, strive against a conclusion in this pessimistic vein, if it were really the true expression of the human, and in particular of the modern, condition of life; but we could not fully carry out this conclusion without the whole life-impulse collapsing, all our courage being extinguished, and our desire for happiness being wholly expelled from our souls; and life itself protests against this; it strives to resist such a self-negation, holds us fast, and compels us to seek some way out of the difficulty. In the first place it drives us to make certain whether pessimism itself does not involve complications, whether it does not of necessity lead us beyond itself and call upon us to seek other paths. If, in the pessimism of the present day, we perceive the product of a peculiar condition, this is itself perhaps something gained, for we are thus liberated from the pressure of an immense, obscure power, utterly disheartening us at the very beginning.

In the first place it is easy to perceive that pessimism cannot assert itself as a final conclusion without becoming exposed to an inward contradiction. From this standpoint sorrow and pain are decisive as to the character of the whole of life, and there is no recognition of any independent reality on the part of the good. The most elementary consideration, however, must convince us that we cannot very well begin with a loss, since we cannot lose anything which we do not possess. We cannot be grieved by the loss of anything, unless in the first place we value its possession. Thus ancient Greek and early Christian thinkers stood for the conviction that evil has no real existence of its own, but is merely a deprivation of good, just as the loss of sight is an evil only for those who can see, and would otherwise signify no loss whatever. Such a statement of the case may be open to objection; but at any rate we cannot doubt that all pain, more especially in relation to

spiritual things, is ultimately referable to some good, even if the latter be limited or hidden. The experience of history, too, will confirm us in this opinion. Indian thought, for example, was greatly influenced by a belief in the transitory character of all earthly happiness, and the consequent emptiness of all human effort; it was considered folly to attach oneself to anything that must pass by like a shadow; here we are given a moving expression of the unceasing changes of the ages, of the replacement of one moment by another. But we may ask: How could this affect man with deep pain and touch his innermost feeling, if he did not carry within him a desire for eternity, and if his nature did not demonstrate, through the very strength of this desire, the fact that it belongs to a timeless order? How could the changefulness of things disturb us, if, like the flies who are born and die in the same day, we belonged to the mere moment? The very power of this pain itself is the witness of a greater depth in human being. Within Christianity it was the moral condition of man, the inadequacy—nay, the perversity, of his feelings, with which life was in the first place occupied, and which compelled it to a gloomy mode of thought; the idea of moral depravity lay upon men's minds as a terrible burden. But moral error would itself be impossible if man was not in some way fitted for morality; he must possess some capacity for personal decision, some freedom of conduct, in order to be capable of error. Moreover, he could not suffer from his error and feel it as a loss to himself if he did not contain some power of good which was working against evil. Pessimism, in taking a moral turn, makes the mistake of perceiving and valuing the hindrance alone, and not the aspiration which experiences the hindrance. But this aspiration is also a part of life and must be taken into account in our valuation of the whole. Pascal was right when he said: "*Qui se trouve malheureux de n'être pas roi, si non un roi dépossedé?*"

These considerations may well be applied to the situation of to-day; however many hindrances, complications and perversities may weigh upon us and cause us pain, they are able to affect us in this way solely because, in our case, life has

acquired a greater energy, has more boldly attacked the most difficult tasks, and has more valiantly striven for freedom in the struggle against fate, than did the life of any earlier age. Thus an impartial vision and a just valuation must perceive that in spite of every hindrance life is growing and must rejoice in the power which springs forth at every point and permeates every relationship. When we compare our own age with the latter days of the antique world (a period with which it is often unjustly associated), we immediately perceive how sharply it should be distinguished from an age which was in reality empty and fatigued, and how characteristic is its effervescing life-energy. When life is predominantly passive it clings, in the first place, to its sensations, and allows itself to be completely dominated by its resistances; if, on the other hand, it is controlled by a powerful impulse towards activity, then the life-process grows beyond the position of mere sensation and ceases to be able wholly to surrender itself to its resistances.

But although such considerations may serve to refute an absolute pessimism, the pessimist in a wider sense need not yet consider himself defeated. For although he is forced to admit that life contains a depth, of what use is this depth if it cannot attain to a proper development? That which is latent within it will not then be able to come together for common action, and life will remain divided and incapable of free development. And this contradiction and the impossibility of overcoming it would justify pessimism, although of a milder type.

Thus all hope of success in the overcoming of pessimism depends upon the possibility of arousing these depths to movement and in some way enabling them to prevail against the resistances. Again, let our consideration of the present be preceded by a glance at the world-historical movement. Within the Indian religions, and within Christianity, it has been found possible to move these depths, but this has not been achieved upon the basis of the broad and immediate experience, but only through an elevation above it, only through a reversal of the immediate condition of life. Thus Indian life obtained a liberation from the confusions of time, a rest in an unchanging eternity through its amalgamation with the all-

permeating Divine being; thus Christian belief took refuge in an all-powerful love which liberated man from every need, created for him a new and more pure life, and, at the same time, gave his true nature (until then obscured and limited) its fullest realisation. Embracing the older types the life-problem presents itself to-day in a more universal fashion; the possibility of bringing about a movement and a development which shall overcome the resistances now depends wholly upon the capacity, through such an expansion, of reaching a new position; it is a question of whether life as a whole can achieve an inner elevation—nay, a reversal, which shall make it superior to the complications of the human situation. Unless this question can be answered in the affirmative there is no possibility of life taking a positive turn. For it is established beyond doubt that we cannot progress in any essential way beyond the chaos of the present situation as the result of any merely subjective emotion or activity.

We can, however, with confidence return an affirmative answer. Life as a whole contains far more than is apparent from the first impression. For the life of man does not exhaust itself in the life-impulse of the separate points and in the exploitation of the forces to be found here, nor in the activities which result from their competition and conflict. In opposition to this disintegration, life comes together to form a whole, and it is precisely this whole which we call *spiritual life*. In it there becomes visible a cosmic movement, an ascent of reality to a new stage far transcending the desire and capacity of the mere man. Working through all the manifold activities of man, this spiritual life accomplishes an inner construction, and builds up for itself a world of its own. It exhibits a creative capacity in the construction of whole departments of life, with their own contents and norms, such as science and art, law and morality; it raises the movement of life above all the aims of the mere man, and opens up a kingdom of universally valid values lying beyond all utility; it develops a spiritual culture in the face of all superficial and merely human culture; it is able to arouse a self-active and original life in every individual, notwithstanding the claims and ties of

the existing situation, a life in which he directly experiences the new world as a whole, thus becoming a world-embracing personality. (This view of the spiritual life, into which we cannot here enter in detail, is more adequately dealt with in *The Meaning and Value of Life* (trans. Lucy Judge Gibson and Professor Boyce Gibson; pub. A. and C. Black).

In turning to this new life the complications of human existence are by no means eliminated. Our immediate existence holds us fast, and only through setting ourselves apart from it and through appropriating the power it contains, can the work of spiritual construction be successful. Much that is strange and obscure remains mingled with our life, and an optimism which, through a mere change in the angle of observation, believes itself able to convert the whole into life and reason is an untenable thing, and indeed from the earliest times has been found rather in books of philosophy than in the conviction of humanity. But through the recognition of the living presence of this new world we may hold ourselves fully secured against pessimism with its paralysing power. For henceforth we are surrounded by greater relationships, we are driven by a superior power, and there can be no doubt of a great goal. Such a deepening and consolidation permits of a powerful combination of all that lends a spiritual impulse to our existence, thus making it effective as a whole. Even when our work does not attain to a complete conclusion, a further development of life can take place; in this case even outward loss may prove a gain.

Taking up this standpoint, we find ourselves confronted by a new picture of existence. From the former standpoint the resistance in the things appeared to be excessive, and the movement threatened to go beyond the guidance of reason. That would be a hopeless evil if our power were confined within a given limit and were incapable of any essential expansion. The possibility of such an expansion is provided, however, by the spiritual life in which our being is grounded. This life is not a given and limited quantity: it carries an infinity in its creative power; and the man who participates in the life can continually draw new force from this infinity; he can now

make new beginnings, and effect an inner elevation of life. Considered from this point of view the world-historical work no longer appears as a peaceful progress along a predetermined path; doubt and movement are continually attacking the whole; through severe upheavals new tendencies are developed, new forces are brought into being, and new relationships are discovered. That which has thus been exhibited in the past will be valid also for the present and the future. The complications of the age, reviewed from this standpoint, are realised to be indications of a great renewal of life still in a condition of flux, which, in the first place, makes itself felt predominantly as a negation, but which could not possibly penetrate so deeply into the condition of things if constructive forces were not already operative in it. It must be our duty to develop these according to our best capacity and to set them in the foreground of life. A joyful view of human affairs will then return, and in the midst of all the resistances a joyful belief in life will assert itself.

A consideration of our study as a whole permits us to realise what it is which to-day stands in question: the earlier constructions of life have become too narrow for us, doubt and anxiety now extend to life as a whole, and it is our task to deepen the latter and find in it the foundation of a universal spiritual development and culture, which utilises everything which the past can contribute, while reaching beyond everything thus received to new heights. For the time being, we perceive only the beginnings of this, but even these beginnings make the age, in spite of all its confusion and incompleteness, one of greatness and importance. It is great in the wealth of its tasks, which no longer merely distract us, but become subordinate to a central aim; it is great in the breadth of its life, in the independence of its search and struggle, in the ever-increasing desire for new depths. Never before has life as a whole been in such a condition of flux, never before has the struggle penetrated so deeply into the ultimate things. In the midst of such a conflict we cannot dispense with a firm faith, but what is now needed is not a faith in remote things, but in the spiritual life which breaks through in us

and is able to create in us a new being. Such a vital faith we must have and may have, if we remain true to our own being, and at the same time enter into relationship with the infinite creative force. Then the age, which to a timid eye appeared small, can become great, and we can joyfully feel ourselves to be its children. We can find in it a value for our life and be of the firm conviction that to-day, as in former ages, no real work is lost.

From the earliest times, spring (and Easter in particular) have been to seekers after truth a symbol for the capacity of renewal, and the regenerative power of spiritual life; for they represent to us the inexhaustible and perpetually renewed force of nature. Therefore let us hope that now, too,* the contemplation of the budding and blooming life around us may strengthen in us the conviction that spiritual life, as well as nature, possesses an eternal youth, and that we human beings are able to participate in this youth.

* This essay was written in March, 1910.

IN MEMORY OF KANT

XIII

IN MEMORY OF KANT *

(d. 12th February, 1804)

When Kant closed his tired eyes, on the 12th of February, 1804, exhausted with unspeakable labour, his scientific position was securely established, his spiritual greatness fully recognised. But in spite of this recognition it was at that time thought possible to progress beyond him more quickly than has in reality taken place. Men honoured him as the fountain-head of a new mode of thought, but they fancied themselves able to develop this, to an important extent, beyond its original state. Such were the views of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. The nineteenth century, however, did not draw further and further away from Kant; on the contrary it went back to him again and again. It repeatedly sought refuge in him from a situation that had became intolerable, looking either for a final conclusion in the central matter, or for safe guidance with respect to its own task. Thus Kant's philosophy is to-day a portion of the living present; it excites and divides men's minds to the point of passion. In spite of our consciousness of its strong eighteenth-century colouration, we feel that, in studying his work, we stand in the midst of our own problems. What a striking corroboration of the saying that kings reign while they are living, but great philosophers after they are dead!

Kant would never under any circumstances have acquired such a position and such an enduring influence, as a mere result of learned investigation and of his services to his own branch of science. He must have brought about a profound alteration and

* From *Der Türmer* of February, 1904.

advance in the core of life and in man's fundamental relationship to reality, in order to be able to maintain such a living interest in the whole of his mode of thought. The following remarks will show that this is in truth the case with Kant, and will endeavour to explain the vitality of his thought.

A first impression shows Kant so thickly enveloped with the armour of learning, that it would hardly be supposed possible that he could ever penetrate to simple, fundamental truths; it might well seem that his laborious and extensive reflection crushes down all intuitive originality. The truth of the matter is quite otherwise. Every great mind is also a creative mind; it is essentially bound up with inner necessities, which, as axioms of the mind's spiritual existence, precede all conscious work and impart to it, in the first instance, a definite direction. In this case, the whole work promotes, in the first place, the development and carrying out of such necessities. The matter acquires an immense impetus and a dramatic intensity through the fact that the demands of a great man are so far from being satisfied with the stage of spiritual life which they find occupying the field, that they come into irreconcilable conflict with it. Therefore in order to remain true to himself, fully to gain his own self, the spiritual hero must resolutely take up the struggle with his environment, and must alter the existing standards and quantities. He must not shrink from pulling down the whole world to make room for the construction of a new, truer, and more essential world. The contemplation of the life-work of such a man is a source of peculiar joy and elevation by reason of the fact that the spiritual necessities force their way safely and joyfully through all obstacles, that in overcoming even the most obstinate resistances they ultimately place life upon a new basis and thus change it for all of us. In Kant there are operative from the very beginning two spiritual necessities which not only insist upon being carried out, but have to undergo mutual adjustment. The first is the demand for a strict science, a science as a system of universal and necessary propositions; the second the demand for a powerful morality, which scorns to serve mere happiness, and insists upon being a complete end in itself, making of man something essentially new. The chief triumph

of his work and the foundation of his life's intellectual happiness was that while each of these two obtained its full rights, both were able to unite and to strengthen one another.

In accordance with this twofold nature, Kant as a whole affects us mainly in two ways: he appears at the same time as the inexorable destroyer of all intellectual dogmatism, and as the rebuilder of morality. That which is really new and great in both achievements lies further back, however, and is of a more characteristic description than is often supposed. Has science not practised severe self-criticism for thousands of years; did not Socrates, when he elevated the concept of science, at the same time exhort to modesty, and has not scepticism again and again acted as a counterpoise to any overstraining of our powers? And is not a critical mode of thought implanted in modern science, in particular, from its very birth, through the work of Descartes? Such is the case, and yet Kant's achievement remains thoroughly characteristic and revolutionary. For he does not merely reflect with regard to the capacity and the limitations of knowledge, standing to some extent outside and, as it were, in front of the matter; on the contrary he places himself in science as a whole and inquires what is indispensable to its existence, what presuppositions and demands it carries within it; he then inquires, further, how far man is able to meet these demands, and from this he gains a precise view of man's characteristic science and truth. In thoroughly carrying out this conception the pre-established system of values undergoes enormous changes, nay, upheavals. Humanity is called upon to bear much painful deprivation, and whether full compensation for this is provided may seem doubtful; but whether there is a loss or a gain is here a secondary matter, and hardly even comes to a hearing, as compared with the stern truthfulness which permeates the whole, with that annihilation of all sham which is here effected with such overpowering force. To man there is denied, henceforth, all knowledge of the actual things, all insight into last causes and purposes; his own world of ideas holds him under firm constraint; never under any circumstances can he overstep the realm of phenomena. It is true that when the subject is thus thrown back upon himself, the

inner achievement of thought grows; since it does not reflect a world confronting it, but builds up its world according to its own laws from the smallest elements, it must contain within itself an immeasurably finer structure than had previously been attributed to it. It carries in itself a greater gradation, more inner movement, and more aspiration towards the whole; and in particular it exhibits a magnificent architectonic. Moreover, there is revealed in all this an incomparable greatness on the part of man, since in this work he does not form a mere fragment of the world, but is able to set himself up against it and to reflect upon it as a whole. He can now probe it down to its ultimate causes, and strive beyond everything finite to the infinite. There is here accomplished, too, a most significant transformation in our conception of our world, in that it is compelled to abandon its previous sensuous immediacy, tangibility and obviousness. When it is clearly realised that we see the world not directly, but by means of our own spiritual organisation, that we do not find it, but ourselves shape it and build it up, the logical element takes precedence of everything sensuous, and there can exist no sort of doubt that our whole world rests upon a framework of thought. With this, crude materialism is cut down at the very root. But in spite of all that is thus gained in refinement and in inner life, the predominance of the negative element becomes unmistakable as soon as we consider the position ultimately and as a whole. It is true that we win a world and a truth, but they are and remain merely human. We can never step beyond the sphere of our experience, certain, as it is, that an imperative desire impels us further. Although the recognition of the limits involves a certain greatness, it remains a bitter greatness, and one full of resignation. It is the movement towards practical reason that first produces a transformation and gives the *yea* the victory over the *nay*.

This movement is far from being completely new. From of old the upheaval of knowledge has often prepared the way for a strengthening of morality. With the Enlightenment, too, such a practical tendency was very widespread, and that not only in the case of the English (although they certainly take first place in this respect): Frederick the Second wished to see the sciences

looked upon as means for the fulfilment of our duties (*les sciences doivent être considérees comme des moyens que nous donnent plus de capacité pour remplir nos devoirs*). What then is so new and revolutionary in Kant? It is first and foremost this, that here, for the first time, the supremacy of morality is made scientifically secure. And this is effected precisely through the transformation and limitation of knowledge with which we have dealt. For previous assertion of the unique value of morality did not remove the doubt whether there was any place at all for morality (with the freedom of action which is necessary to it) in a reality such as ours. In particular the strengthening which was imparted by modern science to the idea of a thoroughgoing causal connection worked directly against any independence on the part of morality. Now Kant converted the causal connection from an order inherent in the things themselves into a law of our thought; and since in this way its validity did not extend beyond our circle of ideas, since it remained confined to our human conception of the world, free scope was left for other developments; and a moral kingdom could unfold itself without obstacle if imperative facts speaking for it were at hand. And that they were at hand Kant endeavoured to show with the whole power and depth of his soul; in no cause was his personality more heartily engaged. His work gains an incomparable greatness through the fact that he discovers in morality a new fundamental relationship of man to reality, the point of departure of a new world. Morality, he shows, is not a means to mere happiness; and to treat it thus is inwardly to destroy it. It is far superior to all self-seeking and all self-will; it speaks to us with an imperative "*Ought*," with the compulsion of a strict duty. But at the same time its concept involves the idea that it can never be imposed from without, never be dictated by an alien power. For then it would operate only through the expectation of reward and punishment, thereby sinking back under the power of the very motive forces above which it should elevate us. There remains as sole possibility, that the origin of morality lies in the spiritual being of man himself; that it is our own inmost will which imposes the moral order. This, however, accomplishes a great

transformation in our conception of man; he now becomes the bearer of a new world, of a supersensuous reality; through creative activity he gains part in absolute truth and is thereby elevated far above all the standards of the realm of experience. The valuation of morality as that which alone gives value to our life and being (which always formed a portion of Kant's deepest conviction) now acquires a complete scientific basis and an inward consolidation; the inexpressible labour of the investigator leads ultimately to a confirmation of his innermost, purely human being. Hence the joyous tone in which Kant often breaks out when developing his moral ideas—a tone which forms a remarkable contrast to the usual sobriety of his work.

Thus, ultimately, the affirmative element in Kant's work obtains the upper hand. He is and remains a critical thinker, but still more is he a positive thinker; and as such he can employ the negative to advance the positive, and in the ultimate consideration of our life and capacity find, "that the unfathomable wisdom, by virtue of which we exist, is not less worthy of honour in that which it forbids to us than in that which it permits to us." The powerful movements in opposite directions which run through Kant's thought-world, and the continual presence of a negation even in the affirmation, give his philosophy a peculiar and very characteristic atmosphere and maintain it in constant movement. Nowhere is there dull tranquillity and mere enjoyment, on every hand we find activity, work, conflict.

If, going beyond the antithesis of theoretical and practical reason, we seek to sum up Kant's work as a unity, we cannot fail to recognise in it a great crisis in the modern movement towards the subject. This movement was already in progress; the Renaissance and the Reformation had prepared its path; and in philosophy Descartes had brought it to mastery. But Kant immensely strengthened the movement: for, on the theoretical side, he liberated man from the pressure of an external world, and, in the sphere of the moral life, rejected all action based upon mere authority, as a subversion of moral freedom. At the same time, however, he essentially deepened the subject and liberated it from all mere confinement to special points;

for he recognised in the subject, an intellectual structure (of thought) and an entire world (of moral action). In this way he placed it upon the safest (and what is, according to our own conviction, the only possible) path, a path powerfully elevating it above all mere egotism and self-will. Even if the execution frequently remained incomplete, Kant turned our efforts along the right and necessary path; he pointed out the sole possible manner in which freedom and law, activity and depth, inwardness and world-life, can be brought together, instead of being left in their usual hostility to one another. That which he effected for the strengthening and deepening of the subject acquires an immense impressiveness more particularly through the fact that it does not develop from the subject itself, as a consequence of its wishes or feelings, but from the matter itself and following upon its necessity. The thinker transfers himself within its demands and shows that, taken as strictly as they must be taken, these can find no other solution than through taking the matter back to the subject, through an enhancement of the capacity of the subject. In this way there is accomplished a vast transformation in favour of the subject, without any sort of direct appeal to the subject, and entirely without any obsequiousness towards it. Precisely in this way is the matter most securely made good, the path most decisively indicated.

Even the most superficial examination of the nineteenth century and of the present day shows that this decision has not ceased to affect us; that, on the contrary, the main tendencies of the Kantian thought-world confront us as tasks ever anew; and that they continuously provide us with invaluable assistance in overcoming problematical or mistaken tendencies. In the next place his critique of knowledge contributed not a little to recall men's minds from the exaggeration of our intellectual capacity in detached speculation, to a mood of calm self-recollection; and it still constitutes a peculiarly formidable weapon against those "scientific" views of the world which come to a conclusion while entirely forgetting the new element which breaks forth in man, and in particular, ignoring the fact that after all we do not perceive the objects of the external world

directly, but only through our soul, through our spiritual organisation. However much this naturalism (misinterpreting in its favour the immeasurable acquisitions of modern science) may imagine itself to be leading the age, it is and remains an uncritical and pre-Kantian mode of thought. No less do Kant's moral convictions involve the most decisive rejection of all those superficialising and perverting tendencies which affected the moral problem and the moral life in the nineteenth century, and by which they still continue to be threatened. In the face of all the growing desire for pleasure and sensuous happiness, the product of an advanced materialistic civilisation, there stands victorious his positive conviction that this path does not lead to genuine satisfaction, and that those who make happiness their aim will be certain not to attain it. In opposition to every sort of utilitarianism stands his defence of the absolute self-value of morality, a defence powerful in its simplicity. In the face of the conversion of morality into action for merely social purposes, for the well-being of others (altruism), stands his idea that morality is not, in the first place, concerned with others but with ourselves, and is striving to elevate us to complete personality. In contrast to the disparagement of morality amongst our modern "supermen," as a petty-spirited and slavish attitude, stands his conviction that man is never greater and more free, that he never gains more of inner infinity, than when he is the bearer of a moral world. All degeneration into a mere moulding of human nature according to fixed patterns, all petrifaction of morality into social custom and prejudices, is securely withstood by the complete originality and spontaneity with which morality, according to Kant, springs forth from the deepest fountains of the soul.

During the nineteenth century the usual subjectivism which seeks to shape the whole of reality from the standpoint of the empirical individual and in his interest, grew stronger and stronger on the one hand; while on the other it found an increasing resistance. The need for a firmer consolidation of forces again gave a greatly increased influence to the social relationships, and more especially to the state. But it is certain that the disintegration and dissipation which now threaten us

cannot be met, unless we can succeed also in getting beyond the individual being from within also and in gaining great relationships within the soul itself. The false subjectivism cannot finally be overcome save through the opening up and appropriation of a real world of essential being in man's own soul. Kant showed us the way in which this can be accomplished.

Thus he works, throughout, as one who exhorts us to the heights of life, as one directing us from the outer to the inner, from what is separate to the whole, from appearance to inner essence and truth. In every direction he sends forth a strengthening and constructive power. At such a time as the present, when we are engaged in the severest conflict with a shallow naturalism and a disintegrating subjectivism, and are in constant need of the sword as well as the spade, can we afford to dispense with such a great constructive power?

The appeal which Kant's work makes to us is powerfully supported by the whole impression produced by his life and personality. It is true that at the first appearance his personality reveals nothing very exceptional; it may almost seem commonplace and *bourgeois*. But it acquires greatness by virtue of the infinite earnestness and the untiring zeal which Kant devoted to a single life-task; above the masses of apparently dry and heavy scholarship stand summits upon which there breaks forth an overpowering genius. An essential portion of the greatness of Kant's nature is his conscientiousness in small things; nothing is hastily or carelessly sketched in; everything is carried out with the most scrupulous care. Yet the work does not fritter away in details, but ultimately joins itself up to form a single whole conception, the different parts mutually strengthening and supporting one another; and in this way there results a growing impression of irresistibility, of an imperative truth. In Kant's case, more than in that of any one else, philosophy is work; and it scorns everything which cannot be so described. But since this work is fruitfully connected with the highest aims of humanity and never, throughout its whole course, loses sight of these aims, it is itself inwardly elevated; nay more, with its advance, the personality of the thinker, too, undergoes an inward ascent. This advance, for

example, ultimately drove a man who possessed at bottom but little artistic feeling, and who was, moreover, situated amidst the standards of a decadent period, to convictions which Goethe could find "quite analogous to his own previous creative work, action and thought." Hardly any other thinker offers such a striking example of the elevating power of work, of the human capacity for inner advancement. Looked at from this personal standpoint, too, he strengthens our belief and confidence in the moral powers of our life. He consistently recognised the great and deep in the apparently simple, vivified it and brought it into operation with gigantic power, thereby inwardly elevating our life and enriching its significance. In the future, too, he will be our helpful ally in the ever-growing and ever-intensifying conflicts which await us. He will lend us invaluable assistance in our endeavour to win a meaning and a spiritual content for human existence.

THE PROBLEM OF IMMORTALITY

XIV

THE PROBLEM OF IMMORTALITY*

The attitude of modern and present day reflection towards the problem of immortality is prevailingly a sceptical, even a negative, attitude. To an affirmative solution of the problem there stands, in the first place, the opposition of science. For science is developing a positivistic and agnostic mode of thought, according to which experience is treated as a closed circle, and every contention which transcends this circle is rejected as unscientific. Science, no doubt, may be ready to admit that the impossibility of an immortality cannot be conclusively proved, but for the belief and life of man that admission amounts to little. Practically, to keep open an indefinite possibility of that kind operates scarcely otherwise than as a direct denial. Moreover, such hesitation and denial find support from the view, continually growing, of the dependence of all mental processes, down to the smallest details, upon specific bodily conditions, in consequence of which the mental life seems to be so closely bound up with the natural organisation that the thought of its being released from that connection meets with constantly increasing resistance.

Again, the characteristically religious movements and ideas of modern times are not adapted to strengthen the belief in a continued existence of the individual. For those movements tend towards a pantheism, in accordance with which the Divine is conceived as a world-pervading life, and there is demanded from the individual complete surrender to this universal life, an infinite renunciation. Even though a pantheism of this

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sort recognises an eternal element in human life, it cannot guarantee immortality to the human being as a whole. It is this, however, that the soul craves, when it strives after immortality.

That the science and religion of modern times are concerned so much with the present life and are so sceptically disposed to all that is beyond, has, indeed, its ultimate ground in an essentially changed estimate of the reality which surrounds us. The time in which Christianity arose and struck root was at variance with this reality. An old civilisation had outlived itself, and a new one had not yet appeared. If life was to retain power and joy, if it were anyhow to be confirmed, it must take its place in a world of belief and hope, this world must become the true home of man, and be for him of all things nearest and most certain. Thus in truth it happened. Even at the height of the Middle Ages, in the writings, for example, of Thomas Aquinas, the Beyond is called straightway the fatherland (*patria*). In such circumstances there was, of course, not the smallest doubt about man's immortality; no laborious chain of proof was necessary. In modern times, however, the whole attitude of man towards visible reality has essentially shifted, and with it the presuppositions of the older beliefs have been shaken even to the ground. New peoples have arisen and entered with fresh vigour into the spiritual movement. The world that surrounds us has indicated a host of important problems and opened out for our work fruitful points of approach; we have won the confidence of being able by our own exertion to shape reality according to the demands of reason, and to make our existence here constantly richer and more worth living. Since, then, the present life offers so much to strive for and to achieve, it has become more and more the main centre of our activity; the Beyond has retired more and more into the background; we have needed it less and less, we have become more and more exclusively occupied with the life of the present. Thus the belief in immortality has gradually lost its firm roots in the soul of the modern man: in fact, the constantly increasing, the constantly more intense, restless work of modern life, with all its anxiety and excitement, might well produce the feeling that

after all such work a complete vanishing away of life would mean transportation into a position of peace, and as such was only to be welcomed. How is it possible that in a mental condition of this kind proofs of immortality can secure any force of conviction?

All this constitutes a powerful tendency of the age; it may even be said to occupy the whole of its outside surface. But it is not the whole of the age; more and more from within there rise up changes which lead back to the old questions. In modern earthly civilisation, with its eye upon man and its hope of guiding him through political and social work to greater happiness, we perceive problems of constantly increasing difficulty. That such a civilisation has for the time being drawn humanity so powerfully to itself and has seemed to satisfy it so completely, is largely to be explained by the fact that upon the visible world there lay as yet the light which an invisible world had cast upon it, that we have seen in it the scene of action, if not of the Divine, yet at any rate of an all-pervading reason; the more the culture of reality has progressed, the more has it chased away that light as a mere illusion, but the more also has it destroyed its own foundation. For when entirely thrown back upon its own limitations, the present loses all inner connection and all soul, and work for it cannot possibly satisfy the inner being of man. Life in that case would be a mere sustaining of external relations; all inner relation to the whole of the world, any wrestling of the individual with the Infinite, would cease; man would become more and more a mere piece of working mechanism. That his whole soul is thereby troubled, that in all our activity and ingenuity of work we have fewer and fewer characteristic and striking personalities, that the inner *niveau* of our mental life is on the decline—this we can to-day less and less deny. Again, the development of mankind to greater power and to greater happiness does not proceed so smoothly and so propitiously as was formerly assumed, obstinate contradictions and unholy passions break out, often there seems to be a want of moral force; we cannot escape the feeling that human existence contains many more problems than the culture of this world can satisfy, and that the aim of this

world, even were it fully within our reach, would not satisfy the deepest longings of the soul. Thus doubts and misgivings spread, they extend also into the very being of the individual and lead him to ask whether, in its entire restriction to the visible world, his life still retains any meaning and worth, whether such a restriction does not reduce it to an unbearable contradiction.

Such experiences and impressions give once more to the problem of immortality a greater potency than in the time which immediately preceded our own. But no sooner do we enter upon a more exact treatment and inquire into the possibility of a proof, than we feel strongly how greatly the intellectual and the whole mental situation has altered relatively to the times in which the belief in immortality stood with more assured authority; we cannot fall back upon earlier proofs, but must handle the problem in our own way, and, in doing so, are obliged to keep steadily in view the experiences and changes of the times.

Whoever maintains a continuance of the human soul beyond the present life is thereby maintaining a fact, and a fact which can either be immediately exhibited or demonstrated through means of other facts. A direct perception seemed to earlier times perfectly possible, even easy; to an older mode of thought a world of spirits seemed to be working unceasingly upon visible reality, seemed indeed so completely to have grown up with, and to have been intertwined with, this world, that the same kind of evidence could be furnished of the one as of the other. Not only amongst rude, primitive tribes, but amongst nations that had reached a high degree of culture, was this the case. The further progress of civilisation, however, repressed and shattered this belief, the spirits degenerated into shadows and ghosts; what had formerly been the sacred belief of pious souls became a mere superstition of the multitude. At the present day the belief in an immediate intercourse with a spiritual world has been revived in spiritualism and has won the convictions of many. But judge as one will about that belief, its mode of proof bears a strong subjective character; it has not that general validity which a scientific method demands, and consequently does not attain to assured conclusions. If only a single instance

of the influence of a spirit world upon our existence were incontestably established, the problem of immortality would enter upon a new phase. When, however, in order to win power of conviction, the fact requires certain persuasions and suppositions, the decision rests with these, not with the alleged fact itself.

Finally, the belief in the bodily resurrection of Christ is still closely bound up with the religious views of numbers of people. What, however, they believe in this case to apprehend as a certain fact, seems to them at the same time to guarantee a continuance of life for all men. But, once more, the doubt arises whether what seems incontrovertible in a certain context of convictions can be regarded as an assured fact where those convictions do not prevail and for all. To be willing to rest the whole of his convictions upon a single alleged historical fact is, for a man of the present day, a matter of great and many difficulties. For he knows how strongly the subjective sentiments of the observer enter into the representation of the facts, especially where strong mental excitement, such as crises of the religious life are apt to engender, prevails. Historical criticism, too, has taught him over and over again, how difficult it is to reconstruct the picture of earlier times from the point of view of later. He cannot, therefore, unhesitatingly accept as scientifically made out the fact vouched for by religion; his decision will be mainly determined by the convictions with which he approaches the said fact. It comes, then, everywhere to this, that we have to decide the problem not so much through direct perception as through considerations of a wider bearing; we have to prove that the statement stands in close connection with assured facts, with a network of facts, and these cannot possibly be dispensed with.

But we cannot enter upon this path without at once recognising the peculiar difficulties of the situation. Proof is easy, where that upon which it depends falls into line with indisputable facts, when the point that is sought for fills up a gap in a chain of evidence, or when this special problem can be looked upon as an instance of a general truth which is already certain. In reference to our problem all this, however, is not the case;

here it is a question about something for which we can furnish no analogies, something that is unique, and the solution of which seems wholly to transcend the capacity of our knowledge. So much is certain: it is here a question about something that is entirely axiomatic, and the answer lies not in special lines of thought, but in the whole structure of our intellectual world. We are fighting here not about a single point, we are fighting about the meaning and direction of the whole.

The proofs offered of immortality have generally been of a twofold kind: on the one hand, the point of departure has been the universal nature of the soul's life; on the other, the specific content or meaning of human life. Formerly one used to seek out qualities of the soul's life which seemed to prove the impossibility of destruction, and in this way the unity and indivisibility of the soul were specially established. Since Plato the thought has constantly found adherents that we need only keep in view the nature of all decay and the character of the soul to be sure of the soul's imperishability. For decay is nothing else than a dissolution of the composite thing into its elements; but the soul, for whose unity the fact of consciousness vouches, cannot in any way be decomposed; it is an original element of reality, and cannot, therefore, possibly perish. From the standpoint of modern times there is offered indeed, as ground of proof, the thought that, as in the universe all energy is conserved, and none can be destroyed, and as the soul is undoubtedly a unique form of energy, it cannot possibly undergo annihilation. Thoughts of this kind will always find adherents, but they do not decide the question; not only are they in the highest degree controvertible, but they prove, even when they are admitted, not what they were intended to prove. We have become to-day exceedingly mistrustful of such abstract considerations; we do not feel by any means certain that what appears to us within the sphere of experience to be simple and indestructible must be acknowledged to be so outside the sphere of experience; it is always a leap from the relative to the absolute. But, granted that a certain indestructibility of the soul were admissible, that upon which, beyond all else, everything depends, in the question of immortality, would by no

means have been won—a moral identity, a unity of connection between the various life-stages, a continuance of the life-work. What profit is there in a persistence of force or of unity if out of it something quite different can be made, if it can be used in a totally different manner from what happens now, if with it the life falls entirely asunder? Against this attempt at a solution the suspicion will also be aroused that such a defence must hold good for all souls, that even in regard to the lowest animals a similar indestructibility could be maintained. Clearly, therefore, we do not get from this kind of proof that upon which, for man, everything depends.

Consequently, it is upon the peculiar nature of the human soul and human life that the assurance of immortality must be based; and, in truth, not only have thinkers for the most part turned their attention to this point, but also for wider circles it is what has been here discovered, what has been here experienced, that has become of decisive importance. But this attitude is involved by the very necessity of the case in the opposition and struggle of *Weltanschauungen*; for it needs a *Weltanschauung* of a special kind to find something unique in our souls, and from this uniqueness to effect a transformation of the superficial view of reality.

First of all then, there can be, of course, no question about a meaning of soul-life that points in this direction when a naturalistic and materialistic theory holds the field. For, according to this way of thinking, there is nothing more in the soul-life even of man than a product of the life of nature which has arisen under certain conditions and which must, after the ceasing of these conditions, again perish; whatever phenomena may be manifested by the human soul, they are regarded, from this point of view, as a mere development of the animal soul; the former can offer no independent point of departure, and open out no new depths of reality; so that here the thought of any immortality entirely vanishes.

Wherever belief rises above naturalism, something unique, something superior to nature will be recognised in the soul of man; and, as this can only be understood as the effect of a new order of things, it may not then seem impossible to

construct from human life theories which reach beyond experience. Now, in this direction we see a rich and variedly ramifying work being taken up; peoples, times, civilisations are reflected in the way in which they regard the essence of the soul and try to deduce from it the necessity for its continuation. We may clearly distinguish here different tendencies. Sometimes it is the universal nature of a being endowed with reason which seems to carry with it the guarantee of a continued existence; sometimes, the special moral nature and aim which certifies a future life for man. According to the ancient mode of thinking, which tended to put on the same level spirit and intelligence, what distinguished the human soul and lifted it above mere time appeared to be the power of thinking enduring, imperishable truths, for that which participates in the eternal must itself have a certain eternity. As in modern time the thought of eternity has generally been allowed to recede before that of endlessness, it has been pre-eminently the endlessly operating desire of life from which leading minds have drawn the assurance of immortality. It seems impossible that nature should have implanted in a being so constraining a desire for an endless life and the movement towards it, only to break it off just as it is beginning. Goethe, for example, was filled with this conviction, especially in his later years. If it is here a question of the universal nature of a reasonable being on which the belief in immortality is based, the matter receives a more precise setting when we turn to the moral faculty of man. With the moral problem, a high ideal has been set before us which, in this short span of life, we can scarcely approach even by a few steps; were this the whole of our being, an impossible problem would be placed before us, and the knowledge of this impossibility could not fail to paralyse all moral effort. Without a hope of being able to become perfect, man cannot strive with all his might for moral perfection. It was this conviction that made immortality seem to no less a thinker than Kant an indispensable postulate of the practical reason. Still more forcibly in this direction has the desire for a moral order, for an equalising justice, worked upon a wide

circle. An unbiased examination of our lot often reveals a sharp contrast between the moral conduct of man and his fortune in life; the good man has often to fight against the severest obstacles, his work is not seldom destroyed and he himself exposed to ruin, whilst the bad man attains the victory and remains in possession even to his end without being so much as disturbed by inward reproaches. Thus morality, whilst it comes to man as a supreme command and requires of him laborious work and great sacrifice, appears powerless in face of the world's machinery; experience of this life shows no ethical order. Yet it does not seem possible to renounce such an ethical order, for what is valued, and necessarily valued, by us as of the greatest worth, must finally be the victor and determine our fate. If this does not happen in the present life, then it must happen in a future life, and so that life we may confidently expect. The more detailed elaboration of this conception has struck out different paths. One such was the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, another that of a final world judgment. But the placing of an inward necessity before all apparent experience was a general characteristic; the moral demand appeared as that which must rule the world at last. If man is placed between the choice, either of letting the moral problem sink down to a weak illusion, or of remodelling his ideas of the world, the latter way will seem to be imperatively called for wherever the moral problem has been seriously taken up.

These different trains of thought could hardly have had the great effect upon humanity they have had, unless there were some truth in them; but that conviction ought not to lead us to overlook the many weaknesses which cling to such modes of proof. He who is satisfied that there is something indestructible in our soul, has not thereby proved a personal immortality. For example, Aristotle, with all his defence of an indestructible faculty of thought, never doubted the extinction of individuality. By other modes of thought it is assumed that what has begun in the course of the world will in some way also attain completion. But such an inference presupposes the rational character of reality, and this would first have to be

proved. The chief question, however, is this, whether it is possible, from the experiences and needs of a specific being, to infer a new condition of the universe, as the assertion of immortality really takes upon itself to do. Must we not first of all have attained some certainty that man is more than a specific being; that, in his sphere, world movements are completed and experiences of the universe revealed? Only thus could what takes place in him validate convictions concerning the whole, and at the same time throw light upon his own position and problem in the whole. But in order here to see our way, we must cast a glance at what is peculiar to human life as contrasted with animal life. We are accustomed to call this peculiarity "spiritual"; but what is the characteristic of this spirituality? It does not add a single quality to nature, but it introduces an entirely new life; it effects a complete change in reality. For, on the level of nature, reality appears as an aggregation of single elements; in the mutual relations of these elements life proceeds; what happens at single points is always turned outward and is dependent upon the outward; whatever soul-life is developed here is nothing more than a concomitant of natural processes; in all the boundless movement of nature there is nothing that experiences what takes place as its own, finds itself in it and gains through it. To the whole all being for self is lacking. Being for self, however, begins at the stage of the spiritual life, and gives to spiritual life its distinguishing characteristic. For here the inward gains self-dependence, here it strives to absorb, to subject to its own laws, to convert into its own possession, everything that comes into relation with itself; here life rises in consequence to a life of self, and reality becomes an inner world. First of all, before meanings and values can be formed, a complete transformation must be effected. As, however, this movement does not form a closed circle, but is turned upon the whole of reality, it can never be understood as pertaining to man alone. As such, it would not only lose all its truth, it would be utterly incomprehensible how it could ever arise from man alone and yet attain to any power. The movement must proceed from the universe itself; it cannot otherwise be understood than that there is to be found in it a

depth of reality; and human striving must be produced and sustained by this movement of the whole.

Now, this depth of reality introduces fresh forms of life. Since here life does not proceed in relations from point to point, but is lived in the whole, and, moreover, always sets the individual in relation with the whole, it has also a different relationship with time and time events. Spinoza's assertion that all true knowledge takes place *sub specie æternitatis* holds good not only in respect of knowledge but of the whole of the spiritual life. Spiritual life is not a flowing away of time, not an adapting of itself to changing temporal conditions, but whatever it develops of meaning and worth is raised above time, is not for to-day or to-morrow, but is independent of all time. Spiritual life and aspiration stretches indeed into time and forms a history there, but in this history of a spiritual kind life seeks a more finished organisation of itself, and abides therefore always in itself; the kernel of the history is here a rising out of mere time to lasting truth and possession, and the kernel of life, although entering into time, remains here superior to mere time. Human life, however, so far as it is of a spiritual character, seems thus to be placed between time and eternity; so far as its deepest depths are concerned, it must be rooted in an order raised above time; yet it can only reach its more inner meaning through work in time and the experiences of time. Owing to this transformation, time no longer appears as the central fact of life which eternity only encompasses, but eternity gives the true standpoint and time recedes into the second rank. That such a change sets the immortality problem in quite another light is plain without further discussion.

The question only is,—to what extent has man a share in this spiritual order? For it is, in this connection, clear that man cannot be immortal either as a mere creature of nature or with all his equipments, but only as regards his spiritual position. If man could only bring forth some productions of a spiritual kind, a knowledge, for example, of eternal truths, in them something eternal might operate. But he himself would have gained no eternity, so that the denial of personal

immortality by Aristotle was logical enough. There can only be a question of immortality when man has formed a central core of spiritual life of his own, when he has become an independent bearer of spiritual life. Now he is not this at the start, but the possibility of it lies within him, and this very possibility itself announces a greater depth in his nature. This spiritual growth of man in individuality shows itself in what we call personality, when that word is understood in its full and proper sense. For personality implies that man recognises the whole of the spiritual world as his own life and being, and that he endeavours with all his might to develop it. A new stage of life then appears which transcends mere spiritual work; in the recognition of personality there grows up an ethical and personal idealism which is clearly distinguished from the more indefinite kinds of idealism. Now, it is the conviction of this ethical idealism that all spiritual life only reaches its complete fulness when it not only proceeds in man and works in him as a natural impulse, but when it is laid hold upon as his own being and transmuted into his own action. For that, however, free choice is necessary—a choice which cannot be accomplished in any single moment, but which must go on through life as a whole, and thereby transform the whole. Thus man becomes a fellow-worker in a spiritual order, a life-centre of spiritual energy, a sharer in the whole of the spiritual world. In so far as he is this, he must, in his innermost being, be supreme over mere time.

Such a superiority to time is not grounded on this single point alone, it is grounded on the whole of the spiritual life. A serious contradiction would be introduced into the whole of spiritual life were it to undertake what is superior to time and then be entirely sacrificed to the destroying power of time; the whole opening out of the spiritual life in humanity, with the deepening of individual life and with the mighty labour of the world history, would be in vain, if all the individual forms swept by like fugitive shadows and forthwith sank into the abyss of complete nothingness, just as every event in time sinks down into ghost-like delusion when it is not sustained by, and cannot serve, an eternal order. Hence it is the belief in the

independence of a spiritual life superior to time, and in the immediate presence of that spiritual life in the soul of man, on which faith in his immortality rests. Man cannot become aware of himself as a member of the spiritual world, and as such shape his effort, without being convinced of an immortality. His life-work does not demand a continuation in time; it bears in itself from the beginning a superiority over time. In this thought we are in agreement with Augustine, the greatest thinker of the Christian world, when he says, "What does not perish for God, cannot perish for itself" (*Quod Deo non perit, sibi non perit*).

We believe, then, that through all this involved argument we have found at last a positive conclusion. Nor do we deceive ourselves in regard to the difference of this conclusion from that which is usually understood by immortality. By personal immortality is generally understood the unlimited conservation of natural individuality with all its interest and relations—a continuance of man with flesh and blood. If, on the other hand, we maintain the time superiority of a spiritual germ in man, if we hold that a spiritual unity of life in man rather than man himself is imperishable, we can fully recognise that, on our view, that imperishability is bound up in the closest way with a natural and temporal form of existence, that this form of existence dominates, indeed, our whole idea of the world. So to defend immortality, as the immortality of that human core that belongs to the spirit world, means, at the same time, to rule out any representation of the exact mode of continuance. In this respect we can fully accept what modern science teaches concerning the dependence of human soul-life upon bodily conditions, and also what it has shown in reference to the manifold states and arrests of consciousness. This need not lead us to materialism. It only warns us to be cautious in admitting these special life-forms to be the only possible ones and in demanding just their continuance. In order to avoid a pantheistic evaporation of the soul-life, we ought not to let ourselves be driven into an obstinate dogmatism as to the particular mode of life at present existing; we have reverently to respect the secret which lies over these things and understand that all which is asserted about the indoor details

of the future life can be nothing more than mere image and simile.

Further, the consideration must make itself felt that an absolute retention of the given nature with all its particularity, limitation and contingency would be a very doubtful good. The ordinary stress of life is maintained on such a retention of the present form of being because it will not relinquish the "sweet habit of existence" (Goethe), and at the same time thinks only of the near future. But our thought should be of wider scope: we should think of the unlimited flow of time, and ask ourselves whether man is always to be tied to what he has done here, whether he is always to look back, or always to pursue the road selected here, whether a Kant is always to philosophise, a Goethe always to compose poetry? As against an absolute binding of man to such special kind of life-work, is there not valid ground for the thought that this particular mode of life is only one of the various possibilities implanted in the spiritual core of man, and that consequently the future is left open? However this may be, we must emphatically insist upon the following. It is not well that the thought of the future should dominate and control thought and sense in such a way as inevitably to drive away care for the present. We have enough to do surely in this life. Not only does there lie around us a boundless field for unwearying exertion and effort. In ourselves there lives the hardest of all problems—the problem of fashioning a spiritual personality, a spiritual individuality. Pondering and meditating over the future may easily lead to lowering our working energy for this endeavour; sighing and yearning for a better time may easily prevent man from making the best of the time that encompasses him. That his life should be lived in the present, and be entirely filled by it, is the best we can desire for him, provided only we understand the present aright; if it does not mean for us a passing moment, which is no sooner born than it passes away, but is grounded and based on an eternal order and is thereby raised to a genuine present.

Overwhelming concern for the future brings with it a further danger. It easily pushes into the foreground the question of recompense for actions, the anxiety for reward or punishment.

Let the demand for a moral order be ever so imperative, yet if this thought dominates the reflection of the individual, and is made the chief motive power of his action, damage to the purity of his motive is scarcely to be avoided.

It is well known that Plato in his chief work put his doctrine of immortality only at the end, after he had shown that the Good contained in its own essence, in its own beauty, the impulse to action, and did not need to lean upon faith in immortality. In his case also the importance of the belief in immortality lay not so much in pointing man to the future as in making the present great and rich for him in content. From a too great troubling about the future we are, however, especially protected, if we keep clearly in view our complete ignorance of its character. And as, in this respect, we are in harmony with the greatest thinker of antiquity, so are we also in harmony with the greatest thinker in modern times. In a passage of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, which has not received much notice, Kant expresses himself on this point with great clearness (Part I, Book 2, section ix.). At first sight, so he thinks, nature seems on this important matter to have provided for us only in a stepmotherly fashion. But suppose it had been otherwise, and we knew more of the things that are beyond, it might even be that "God and eternity, with their awful majesty, would stand ceaselessly before our eyes." Yet would not man, constituted as he is now, be always troubling himself about the happiness there to be hoped for, instead of acting from the pure thought of duty and with unselfish disposition? And therewith would not just that be taken away from him in which his highest worth consists? After having, in contrast to this, made clear the advantage of our ignorance so that "there is room for true moral disposition, entirely devoted to the law, to come about," Kant concludes with these words: "Thus what the study of nature and of man teaches us sufficiently elsewhere may well be true here also, that the unsearchable wisdom by which we exist is not less worthy of admiration in what it has denied than in what it has granted."

GOETHE IN HIS RELATION TO PHILOSOPHY

XV

GOETHE IN HIS RELATION TO PHILOSOPHY *

The relationship of a great man to one of the main departments of spiritual life is an object of study which has a peculiar charm and may possess some value. For such a man takes up nothing in detail without translating it into his own language, and in the process of appropriation remoulding it; and in the same way every department of work as a whole, when it comes into contact with him, passes under new conditions and is compelled to realise its own deepest essence and purpose. Goethe's relationship to philosophy is characterised moreover by a peculiar tension, since in this case forces of attraction and repulsion work against one another, and every affirmation is made to yield a negation. His own immediate feelings did not provide the great poet with any strong impulses towards philosophy. In the first place, he did not need a laborious scientific process of knowledge, a complicated apparatus of concepts and doctrines, in order to arouse his creative activity. He experienced within himself the mighty outpourings of a nature which gave his conduct a clear direction and his being a secure attitude towards reality; he was thus in possession of the best of all, that which philosophy can do no more than strive after. Moreover to a man delighting in clear objective vision and thirsting after unceasing contact with reality, philosophy, with its tendency to create distinctions, was apt to seem a disturbance and a hindrance. Does not its analysis sharply separate things which belong inseparably together? Do

* A speech delivered at the General Meeting of the Goethe Society at Weimar on June 9, 1900 (published in the *Goethe Jahrbuch*, vol. xxi., 1900).

not its abstract concepts lead us into a realm of pale shadows and mere outlines; does not its obstinate insistence upon general principles do injustice to the inexhaustible wealth of individual formations? Its method appears arbitrary and unnatural, in as far as it takes man away from the world [which surrounds him on every side and in which his whole being is rooted] and puts him in the position of mastering it from without. Influenced by such thoughts as these, Goethe himself repudiated the faculty of philosophy, in the strict sense of the word, and often expressed himself in terms of grave doubt, nay aversion, with regard to its task.

All such negation is nevertheless, at bottom, only the rejection of a particular *academic* and pedantic *type* of philosophy. Goethe neither wished to avoid, nor could he have avoided, philosophy in the wider and *purely human* sense. In the first place, a poet in the general style, whose own feelings lovingly embraced all that was human and whose strong nature opposed at every point an active work to the world that pressed upon him, such a poet could not leave out of account a sphere of life like philosophy, so pregnant with meaning for humanity. Least of all could he do so in such an age as his own, when Kant's teaching had produced a movement of opinion and a revolution in thought, which made itself felt, not only in scientific circles, but throughout the whole of life, and threw a new light upon poetic creation itself. This outward stimulus came into contact, too, with an inner desire of the man himself, a desire not turned directly towards philosophy, but one which could not develop itself without giving rise to a kind of philosophy. This was the impulse to make clear to himself his own purpose and creative activity, his own innermost spiritual nature, to explain himself to himself with complete clearness; without such an expression, without such a consciousness of self, life would have lacked a chief element in its perfection. Now in this personality, the life-process encompassed the whole breadth and depth of reality; from within it was bound as closely as possible to the All as a whole; thus a self-realisation and expression of this life becomes a direct revelation of the core of reality, a decision with regard to all the main questions of human existence; there results a philosophy, fundamentally

different from all systems of philosophy, and yet an inner whole, a process penetrating all creative work and holding it together. The great poet becomes at the same time a great thinker, his work is not only saturated with ideas, but becomes in its entire extent an unceasing revelation of a characteristic view of life.

Such a philosophy of personal revelation, such an expression of innermost being, does not desire to force itself upon others, and therefore does not require any systematic method of proof. It does not seek its truth in an agreement with any world outside man, but in the elevation of personal being, in fruitfulness for life and creation. Its certainty is based upon the proofs of spirit and power, and not upon doctrines and formulæ. To explain Goethe's philosophy means, therefore, to penetrate to the convictions which permeated his work. His thought is valuable to us as an expression of his being, a reflection of his creation ; and it is to be hoped that the incomparable nature of this life-work will stand forth with peculiar clearness when the presentation of the thought has permitted us to review the work as a whole. Our attempt to attain this high aim must plead for indulgent consideration, since we have to gather together in one view that which a study of the inner movement of this rich life reveals as existing in various grades.

Towards what point should we more especially direct our attention in endeavouring to grasp the specific character of a thinker? In our opinion we must consider in the first place his attitude towards the great antitheses of life and the world. In how far are these present in his work ; how great is the tension with which he invests the conflicts ; in what direction does he seek to overcome the oppositions, and what means does he suggest for this purpose? In Goethe's case it is no single antithesis which dominates his work and thought; the wealth of the world presents itself to him in a series of contrasts. And these are not so treated that one side overmasters and suppresses the others, but the various aspects, while clearly defining themselves, powerfully maintain their specific characteristics with regard to one another : they do not attain their adjustment through any kind of theory, but through the medium of the work itself, which places them in the most fruitful contrast with one another,

and achieves its greatest in allowing life to flow over, communicating from the one to the other.

Goethe's work along these lines was never free from misconstruction and misinterpretation. He who treats this problem of human life with the highest artistic capacity, will communicate to others the struggles and upheavals of his own soul in the most purified form only; under these circumstances, the liberation of the matter from its heaviness is apt to conceal the deep earnestness and the painful excitation of the creation itself; and that which proceeded from a mighty upheaval of spirit may appear to the spectator no more than a facile play of talent, an enjoyable diversion. Plato, for example, often seemed much calmer and more complete than in reality he was [Goethe's picture of him in the *Farbenlehre* is highly misleading]; and still more in Goethe's own case there is a failure to understand the mighty feeling which glows in his creative work, the Faust-like wrestling for truth, the power of the demoniacal, which he succeeded, it is true, in taming, but only through severe effort and unceasing work. To misunderstand this is to misunderstand the power and depth of the whole. It allows Goethe to appear cold and facile and hinders a proper sympathy with his being and work.

However powerfully life struggles to manifestation, it remains, in the case of Goethe, in the midst of the *great world* and is embraced within its order. Even the boldest thought does not range beyond the being of this world; an inexhaustible life bears it forward from eternity to eternity; to deduce the world from elsewhere, or even to seek to alter it in its foundation, would be foolish and presumptuous. Thus all effects proceed from an unchanging foundation; at each particular point it is a fixed nature which is the source of all activity; an immovable fate here takes precedence over freedom. But this fate becomes converted into freedom, in as far as nature is nothing other than an unceasing living and shaping. Nature must continually manifest and assert itself, it finds its height only through full appropriation; in spite of the rigidity of its being, it is at the same time an unceasing new task. With Goethe's personal life, too, all activity is the development of a clearly marked nature; in spite of all its expansion it remains within a given framework

of existence; the new towards which it aspires signifies no sharp cleavage, no revolutionary reversal; on the contrary, all movement is progress along a prescribed path. But this progress is a personal task and demands untiring work; ever anew nature must be assimilated, developed, perfected. Thus being and action find a characteristic equilibrium. Life aspires towards breadth and yet remains within itself; in all the intensity of its movement, it retains a secure place, a firm support within its own being.

In the All we are placed, and to the All we belong. But what is the All itself? Is it the sum of the direct phenomena, or does it contain a depth beyond this; does the *visible* signify everything, or does an *invisible* life rule over it? Goethe came to a decision upon this problem and expressed it clearly. The world has an inner life, and that not only at its particular points, but as a whole. A single activity operates in all multiplicity and holds it together. In all its detached manifestations nature reveals One God. God is not, however, detached from the world and set up over against it as a foreign object; His action upon it is not understood as an interference from without! The foundation of the poet's entire existence was his mode of seeing God in nature, and nature in God; he was unreceptive and even intolerant in his attitude towards the conception of a dead matter, moved only from without. This conviction of the immanence of the Divine in the world, of God's action as proceeding from the essential nature of the things themselves, is to be found in every department of his work. That which it achieves, however, for the deepening of existence and the adjustment of its oppositions, can be accomplished only through a decisive superiority on the part of the Divine Life over the immediate phenomena. Goethe stands entirely apart from a soulless pantheism which dissolves God in the world and allows unity to become scattered in multiplicity. For him, the idea of the universal being effects a fundamental change in the aspect and task of the world; he does not forget in the *unendlichen Bedingungen des Erscheinens* the *Eine Urbedingende.* He passionately rejects the mechanism and materialism of a *système de la nature*, because it converts that which seems higher than nature, or a higher nature within nature, into a material, heavy

nature. Since Goethe invariably saw the vision of God in nature as corresponding with a vision of nature in God, everything visible was for him an expression, a reflection, a manifestation of an invisible cosmic Being, which conceals itself behind nature, that it may become comprehensible to us.

> "So im Kleinen ewig wie im Grossen
> Wirkt Natur, wirkt Menschengeist, und beide
> Sind ein Abglanz jenes Urlichts droben,
> Das unsichtbar alle Welt erleuchtet."
>
> (HEMPEL, XI*a*, 94.)

Goethe's conviction had no deeper basis and his action no stronger motive power than his complete permeation with the idea of the presence of an all-embracing inner life, occupying the whole breadth and content of reality without and within. This it was which drove him to strive towards the whole at every point, to seek the infinite in the smallest things, and to perceive and to honour life on every hand. This it was which kindled within him a great love for all that is real and for humanity in particular, since it invariably penetrated to a depth at which something noble and divine is revealed, which all the guilt and suffering of life cannot destroy. The manner in which such a world-life, embraced within and inspired by the Divine Unity, is able to absorb the great antitheses of life, and reconcile them, must now be the object of our attention.

The world-life moves in its whole length and breadth between the antithesis of *power* and *order*. An immeasurable life pours itself forth, but it subjects itself to fixed laws and adapts itself to permanent forms. Goethe's relationship towards these two sides of nature was not always the same: at first he was more engrossed with the greatness and power of nature's creative activity, while later his mind dwelt with peculiar pleasure upon the simplicity and permanence of its laws, upon the eternal and typical, which holds all the phenomena together. He was all the while, however, ruled by the conviction that the inexhaustible flood of life does not dissolve into vagueness and emptiness, but shapes itself to definite forms and rational relationships. At the same time the irrefragability of the laws does not prevent independent action and free formative activity

on the part of the separate points; in wondrous fashion the strictness of this universal order is combined with an independent manifestation, a free shaping activity throughout the entire breadth of existence; and like the whole which contains us, human life itself is in some incomprehensible fashion compounded of freedom and necessity. Thus regarded, reality is no uniform whole, but a world which itself contains worlds. The antithesis between *unity* and *multiplicity* is overcome in a most fruitful fashion, through the whole, with all its wealth, placing itself within each particular thing and making of this a means of expression; this occurs in a special way at each point, and not without independent action on the part of the point. Then each separate thing lives in itself, but at the same time derives life from the whole; while it develops a specific character of its own, it remains an expression and image of the universal. This unceasing repetition of the great in the small, and this eternal sameness of nature, in all its immeasurable manifoldness, never fails to fill the poet-thinker with fresh admiration:

"Freudig war, vor vielen Jahren,
Eifrig so der Geist bestrebt,
Zu erforschen, zu erfahren,
Wie Natur im Schaffen lebt.
Und es ist das ewig Eine,
Das sich vielfach offenbart;
Klein das Grosse, gross das Kleine,
Alles nach der eignen Art.
Immer wechselnd, fest sich haltend,
Nah und fern und fern und nah;
So gestaltend, umgestaltend—
Zum Erstaunen bin ich da." *

(HEMPEL, II, 227: *Gott u. Welt.*)

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* Joyfully, some years ago,
Zealously my spirit sought
To explore it all, and know
How all nature lived and wrought:
And 'tis ever One in all,
Though in many ways made known;
Small in great, and great in small,
Each in manner of its own.
Ever shifting, yet fast holding;
Near and far, and far and near;
So, with moulding and remoulding—
To my wonder I am here.

Such a conviction justifies both a joy in each specific thing and a sincere respect for all individuality: every man must think in his own way, and he can discover truth along his own path alone; nay, out of the given world he must first create his own world. When, therefore, every man allows every other man his own truth, every cause of conflict is removed and with it all tendency to mutual oppression. And yet, with all this freedom, mankind does not become disintegrated, truth does not sink to be a mere opinion or whim of the individual. For in the midst of all movement, we are surrounded and supported by a single, common life; "thus each may possess his own truth, and yet it is always the same truth."

Closely involved with this living presence of the whole, this unceasing repetition and ever fresh formation of simple basic forms, is Goethe's conviction of the *continuity* of all Being and Becoming, of the flawless gradation of organic life [in particular]. His work and experience confirmed him more and more in this idea that a general type, elevating itself through metamorphosis, runs through the entire range of organic creation. In general, there is here no sharp separation between higher and lower; nothing is sacrificed and made into a mere means for external aims [after the usual teleological fashion], but all manifoldness here receives "equal rights at the common central point, which manifests its hidden existence precisely through the harmonious relationship of all parts to itself." As in nature, so also in history, nothing arises save what has been already notified, and it is a most encouraging experience that "the true men of all ages act as forerunners to one another, point to one another, pave the way for one another." The ideal of conduct is developed in accordance with the general principle. All that is violent, disjunctive and revolutionary, is rejected, for the simple reason that it is not natural. Goethe had this most pronounced dislike for all disorder and lawlessness, he invariably sought to connect his actions with something existing, to improve and elevate the existing by means of a steady continuation.

The conviction of this rooting of all reality in a universal world-life, operates, further, towards the settlement of a great

antithesis. For it provides a means for bridging the gap between *time* and *eternity*. The former no longer seems a mere appearance, since it is the scene of immeasurable, ever renewed life, and at every epoch, nay, at every moment, it possesses a specific incomparable character. Yet since it is ultimately one and the same life, which reveals itself through all the shifting forms, all manifoldness remains inwardly related; through every garment there again appears the same Being. Thus the new is at the same time something old, truth does not lie in some remote future, but has long since been found, a link binding noble spirits together. But since the new always possesses a characteristic nature of its own, life acquires an unceasing movement even in its restfulness; only all our activity, thought and action is not directed, with hasty desire, towards a supposititiously better future, but towards the eternal, which may be grasped directly from the present. In this case the day does not give rise to the day, the moment does not devour the moment. The intransitory appears in the transitory, the permanent in the fleeting. Every condition and every instant is of unending value; for it is the representative of the whole of eternity.

Not only is the whole breadth of the world elevated through its relationship to an all-embracing life; but the world-process develops, in its inner structure and workings, great antitheses and overcomings. In the first place, it involves an unceasing *separating* and *uniting*, a receiving and giving back, a straining apart and yearning to unite, an inbreathing and an outbreathing. In human life this manifests itself more especially as the co-operation of thought and action; the sum of all wisdom consists in recognising that both move to-and-fro, outbreathing and inbreathing, testing one another after the fashion of question and answer. But in its sphere, too, thought will overcome the chaos of the first impression, only if it at first separates and then unites; it must consider the appearances as independent of one another and seek forcibly to isolate them, and then bring them together and unite them in a common life. Since, in this fashion, all manifoldness stands out clearly and retains its specific character even in its union, the whole

gains a plastic character and reality is converted into a cosmos full of life.

The picture of this cosmos becomes still richer in content by reason of its comprehension of the antithesis of *inner* and *outer*, which extends both through the cosmic whole and through human existence. The antithesis between inner and outer is of the highest importance for the artistic mind; for is it not a fact that the plane of contact of the two forms his workshop? And Goethe threw the whole force of his deepest personal being into this problem. In his case the inner and the outer are far from becoming merged in one another; there remains a constant tension between the two. Yet to tear them apart is destructive of life. The inner is not complete in itself, merely needing subsequently and incidentally to express itself outwardly; on the contrary, it cannot shape itself and realise itself without the aid of the outer; the organ is first opened through the object; the outer, moreover, does not operate with a mechanical compulsion, for it gains a present and a power only in as far as it is gripped by the inner. In Goethe's case this experience of creation becomes in a most conspicuous degree an inner necessity of his being; never more than at this point does his art appear the dominating power of his life and the solvent of every difficulty. It drove him with overpowering force to convert into artistic or poetic form everything that gave him joy or pain, or in any way absorbed his mind; by thus placing it outside himself, by making it objective, he secured peace for himself, and was able to look upon the matter as settled. Thus all his creative work becomes a revelation of his own being; it acquires that extraordinary truthfulness and that marvellous simplicity, which distinguish Goethe from all others. When the inmost being is so dependent upon expression, there can remain no division between inner and outer:

> "Nichts ist drinnen, nichts ist draussen,
> Denn was innen das ist aussen,"

and of himself the poet is able to say:

> "Teilen kann ich nicht das Leben,
> Nicht das Innen noch das Aussen,

Allen muss das Ganze geben,
Um mit euch und mir zu hausen.
Immer hab' ich nur geschrieben
Wie ich fühle, wie ich's meine,
Und so spalt' ich mich, ihr Lieben,
Und bin immerfort der Eine."
(HEMPEL II, 396: *Zahme Xenien.*)

It is through this union of soul and object that we may explain that creation out of the nature of the things themselves, that *objective thought*, which is Goethe's most outstanding characteristic. At the same time it is clear that this objectivity does not lie outside but inside the spiritual life; this objectivity of the thought does not signify a soulless portrayal of something lying without; for it is the fundamental condition of all artistic achievement that the object is drawn into the inner life, that life from the soul streams over into the things, spiritualising and elevating them. Very wonderful and impressive is it that, in this process, the object, in spite of its appropriation, retains its own nature and is capable of exerting upon the human subject a broadening, calming and clarifying influence, that the subject's feeling adapts itself to the object, becomes imbued with it, and itself acquires an objective character. All true creation thus appears as a synthesis of spirit and world, as a great miracle giving "a most blessed assurance of the eternal harmony of existence."

Such convictions involve a decision as to the relationship between *art* and *nature*. Although art may not divorce itself from nature, imposing itself upon the latter with self-willed pride, under no circumstances can it become a mere imitation of nature. Its whole effect is ennobling and clarifying. The artist thoughtfully gives back to the nature which itself produced him, a second nature. It is true that all artistic effort is directed towards truth, but artistic truth is by no means the same thing as natural reality. If the artist did not already carry the world by anticipation in himself, he would, though seeing, be blind. He must "know the sphere of his powers, he must build a kingdom for himself within the kingdom of nature; for if he becomes amalgamated with nature and loses himself in her, he is no longer to be called an artist."

Thus regarded, creative work lies beyond the antitheses and catchwords of subjectivity and objectivity, realism and idealism; it is raised above them, not so much by virtue of any theory, as through its own development, through the formation of a new world beyond the range of these conflicts.

When, however, a new spiritualised world rises up in personal activity and demonstrates its capacity in a powerful holding together and victorious elevation of life, the man, the artist, the thinker, cannot place his activity in an antithesis to the essential nature of the things themselves, he cannot tear the world apart into *appearance* and *being*, for he knows that, with his work, he stands at the heart of reality, and opposes any doubt of man's capacity to penetrate to the inwardness of nature with the confident saying:

"Wir denken, Ort für Ort
Sind wir im Innern."

Is it not a noteworthy example of a division of the purpose of an age into completely opposed tendencies, that this powerful affirmation of man's relationship to the core of reality should have coincided with the sharpest possible separation of subject and object, of appearance and "thing-in-itself," as developed by Kant? In Goethe's case, too, the fundamental conviction was sufficiently powerful to give rise to a characteristic, scientific procedure. With him, to explain a thing does not mean to get behind the thing and deduce its being from a superior principle, but to grasp its relationship and effects as a whole; the investigator does not look for something behind the phenomena, but seeks to enter so deeply into them that he reaches basic phenomena. These are self-explanatory, and with them man must be contented. Theory is valuable only as far as it exhibits the relationships of phenomena to one another.

The investigation is therefore capable of pressing forward to the full truth. But it can do so, only in as far as it remains within the limits of human capacity, and does not strive beyond the accessible to the inaccessible. Joy in man's rich possession is accordingly joined to a clear realisation and conscientious presentation of human limitations. Nay, that which in its

effect upon us is as clear as day, becomes an insoluble mystery when more deeply examined. Delight in knowledge is therefore purified from that pride of pedantry and that craving for mere analysis which distinguished the Enlightenment. In the midst of the bright light of this world we are ever in contact with mysteries; "mysterious even in the light of noon"—this is the last word of research.

Throughout the whole of this life man sees himself unceasingly dependent upon the great world; inwardly to appropriate it becomes the core of his wish, and in this work his soul attains to a secure superiority with regard to the whole routine of petty human affairs, a complete indifference to the superficiality of conventional social life. This liberation does not, however, in Goethe's case, cause the thinker to retire to a solitary height, to alienate himself from his surroundings, as is so often the case with those whose craving for the cosmic is not balanced by a great love for humanity. Further, the tendency towards the All does not cause any suppression of the human element; for Goethe invariably understood the cosmic from the standpoint of the human—

> "Ist nicht der Kern der Natur
> Menschen im Herzen?"

He returns again and again from his distant excursions to humanity: for creative activity completes nature, and begins a new spiritual and moral order. However much man draws upon natural relationships and continues nature's task, there takes place in him a new movement of the most significant description. That which took place in the outer world through obscure impulse and under the influence of a superior compulsion, attains, in his case, to clear consciousness and personal action. He is able to rethink the highest thoughts to which nature's creation can elevate itself, he must discover through free decision the bounds which are assigned to other beings by the universal order. His existence involves a great problem. For in man there surges up a mighty energy and the natural impulse allows this to scatter itself over an unlimited area; but in order to bring it into equilibrium with the surrounding world

there must be limitation, abnegation, self-discipline. And if it be these which impart to man his greatness and dignity, the *ethical task* steps into the centre of life, and the superiority of the *ethical values* attains to the fullest recognition.

"Wenn einen Menschen die Natur erhoben,
Ist es kein Wunder, wenn ihm viel gelingt;
Man muss in ihm die Macht des Schöpfers loben,
Der schwachen Ton zu solcher Ehre bringt:
Doch wenn ein Mann von allen Lebensproben
Die sauerste besteht, sich selbst bezwingt;
Dann kann man ihn mit Freuden Andern zeigen
Und sagen: Das ist er, das ist sein eigen!

"Denn alle Kraft dringt vorwärts in die Weite
Zu leben und zu wirken hier und dort;
Dagegen engt und hemmt von jeder Seite
Der Strom der Welt und reisst uns mit sich fort:
In diesem innern Sturm und äussern Streite
Vernimmt der Geist ein schwer verstanden Wort:
Von der Gewalt, die alle Wesen bindet,
Befreit der Mensch sich, der sich überwindet."
(HEMPEL, I, 129: *Die Geheimnisse.*)

The problem of *liberation* through the *overcoming of self*, through *self-limitation*, is one which Goethe took up with great personal earnestness, as may be seen from a consideration of his inner life, which was an unceasing building-up of himself, an endeavour to be and to remain at one with himself. Through feeling and action, his life effected a firm union of earnestness and love, and he regarded this as the one thing of value in human existence. There is here revealed a powerful desire for concentration and quiet solitary feeling, yet at the same time we read: "Pleasure, joy, participation in the things, is the sole reality, and can again give rise to reality; all else is vanity and leads only to disappointment." [*Briefwechsel mit Schiller*, II, 47]. And this is no mere theory; the whole of his life is a manifestation of such feeling. Goethe also shows a combination of ethical conviction with the substance of his life-work, in as far as his whole creative work is filled with the aspiration to pay honour to the truth and the truth alone, and with manly power to hold aloof all hindering, evil, demoniacal influences, such as pride, humbuggery, and factious

spirit. With the overcoming of these demons the work of art, the expression of undefiled truth, becomes a directly moral action.

Having attained to this height we find ourselves beyond the antithesis of an *ethical* and an *æsthetical* view of life, which has for millenniums been a source of passionate conflict. It is true that Goethe demanded complete independence for art; artistic culture must go its own way and will take no orders from any other department of life; he would have indignantly rejected, as a crime against the spirit, any attempt to employ the police to guide art along the right path. But although he will not allow his human and poetic freedom to be limited by conventional morality or by pedantry and conceit, he understands how, from within, to bind the moral and the artistic sides of life into an inseparable unity. Only together do they attain perfection. Goethe is as far removed as possible from that presumptuous elevation of the æsthetic view of life above the ethical, that depreciation of plain morality, which we note [generally in close connection with personal vanity] as one of the least agreeable features of romanticism, both new and old.

Finally, Goethe's attitude towards *religion*, too, reveals the positivity and sincerity of his mode of thought. It is true that, in accordance with the peculiarity of his nature, he did not possess that type of religion with which the majority of mankind cannot dispense; he had not a religion which imparts a new life through a profound upheaval and total reversal; one must beware by an artificial interpretation of isolated expressions of bringing him too near to such a mode of thought. But he had another kind of religion, derived from the sincerest feelings and closely united with his life-work as a whole. A conviction which refers each particular thing to its connection with the whole, which understands all the manifoldness of nature as the revelation of a universal being, and sees this being operating with power at every point, cannot fail to arouse the consciousness of dependence upon Higher Powers and a feeling of thankful reverence. Fundamental feelings of the noblest kind spring from the relationship of man to the Infinite: thus, in the first place, *faith*, not as the acceptance of a

doctrinal formula, but as a strong feeling of security for the present and future, due to reliance upon a super-great, super-powerful and unfathomable Being; thus, also, that which "nobody brings with him into the world, yet which is all important if a man is to become a *whole* man," namely, veneration. Flowing from such deep springs, religion permeates life with the most fruitful effects. It teaches men to accommodate themselves to the inevitable; it furthers the pure and peaceful intercourse of individuals with one another and the union of men's minds and hearts; it affects in a peculiar degree the consciences of individuals, whether to excite them or to pacify them. For the poet, it is most directly experienced through his contact with artistic creation. His successes, his discoveries, his happy syntheses, are not the fruits of his own reflections; they come to him from a superior power: they cannot be forced; they must be given. His creative power is a gift from above, to be joyfully received, to be thankfully honoured. Such a feeling of joyful thankfulness permeates the whole of Goethe's life and work. Further, according to him a work of art demands religious feeling in as much as it insists upon a pure and innocent contemplation of its object, nay, a reverence for it; art demands enthusiasm; it is based upon a deep, indestructible earnestness. The feeling for truth which imbues the true artist is the twin sister of piety. In all the foregoing, religion is a means for the elevation, not the suppression of life; it makes men joyful and strong, not fearful and weak. We are not to lament over the transitory nature of things, but to seize the eternal in the temporal. Thus the enduring things of this earth become the guarantees of an eternal reality, and the poet, full of an inexhaustible passion for life, can take to himself the words of Lorenzo di Medici, that those are dead, even in this world, who have no hope of another.

Thus we are given a vision which ranges above and beyond all time and experience. But Goethe did not care to remain in these high altitudes of speculation; it was his custom quickly to return to objective existence, where lies the region of our work, and where such an immeasurable task awaits us.

In the light of his creative work how great and rich our life appears! He did not subordinate it to a single antithesis, thereby forcing it in a single direction: he divided it into a series, a network of antitheses, the members of which are clearly divided and powerfully self-assertive, while at the same time unceasingly striving towards one another, and finally all unite in one common life. Unity and multiplicity, rest and movement, division and consolidation, inner and outer, man and world, good and beautiful, time and eternity, in this way found their reconciliation; and at the same time the whole of existence, in quiet but diligent work, experiences a spiritualisation, a clarification, an ennoblement. Through a self-deepening there results a great synthesis of life; reality becomes united into a single structure, giving a specific form to all manifoldness and providing an answer to every basic question.

In the construction of such a synthesis, the fruitfulness of which was attested not only by the poet's whole personality, but also by his output of great works of art, must we not recognise an important problem, and a valuable gain for scientific philosophy? Are not great experiences made available for philosophy through the synthetic vein which is here revealed; and does it not here come into contact with the most manifold relationships and connections? And will not philosophy find an attractive problem in studying the fashion in which, in Goethe's case, there is produced, above and beyond all reflection and theory, an all-embracing view of life, nay, a spiritual reality? Is it not possible that philosophy will have to enlarge its fundamental concept of truth in order to do justice to the life-work with which it is here brought into contact?

But we will leave such problems to scientific philosophy, and devote ourselves for a few minutes to the question of what man as man may obtain from Goethe's work as a whole, of what the poet may give him of permanent value. Unfortunately this question has not yet become superfluous. For while some allow themselves to be so fettered by the overflowing richness of the particular details that they cannot adequately enjoy the whole, others fear that so much reverence for the great man will hinder

their own creative activity and suppress the living present. As if indeed reverence for Goethe signified a confinement to the rigid doctrine of a particular party, a weakening of one's own specific character, a sheltering behind the closed gates of the past! Nothing could be further from the mind of the man who could answer the question:

"Was willst du, dass von deiner Gesinnung
Man dir nach ins Ewige sende?"

with:

"Er gehörte zu keiner Innung,
Blieb Liebhaber bis ans Ende."
(HEMPEL, II, 349: *Zahme Xenien.*)

—the man who hated all doctrinal and party spirit with the whole force of his soul, and who never, under any circumstances, sought to force into temporal norms the life which eternally pours forth afresh. Hardly ever was a great man further removed than was Goethe from any and every attempt to force his specific nature upon others. Just as his work came from him as a revelation of his personality, so, in reality, his life-work appears to be more and more the expression of an incomparable individuality the more we penetrate beneath its surface and the more we understand it as a whole. To treat Goethe as a typical man whom we should all, as far as possible, imitate, and whose convictions we may swear by, is to do the bitterest injustice to this unique personality. It was not Goethe's aim to be any man's master. The desire to see other people in harmony with oneself, was to him a huge folly; just as one person never understands another more than approximately, he can understand him in a fruitful fashion only when he understands him according to his own nature. The man to whom all true development is self-development, and who utters the warning:

"Ursprünglich eignen Sinn
Lass dir nicht rauben,"

is incapable of suppressing independence; he seeks to influence only in the sense in which one spirit may rouse another, one

individual nature stimulate individuality in others. A development of our own individuality therefore results when we come into contact with him, and allow his powerful and clearly defined nature to exert its influence upon us. For his individuality is more than an accidental peculiarity, it is a spiritual actuality, nay, the bearer of a spiritual reality. Can we not discover in this reality a penetrating vision of the world, a life-possibility, contact and adjustment with which promise a rich gain, and are indeed a necessity for all education that is to take a deep root and to work towards the whole? And we do in truth await such a gain from genuine and independent intercourse with Goethe; we await it as *modern men and women*, as *Germans*, and as *children of the present day*.

The Modern World has dissolved the dream-like mutual contact between man and world in which earlier ages lived; it has widely separated subject and object, psychical condition and physical objectivity. This brings with it a great clarification, but at the same time a painful division of life; the ages have witnessed a hard struggle between subject and object, in which each has struggled to master, nay, entirely to thrust aside the other. Thus life is drawn into opposed paths; on the one side the subject with a mighty effort pushes itself to the front, seeks to assert its freedom and unconditionally to render the whole of existence subject to itself; on the other, the object raises itself to gigantic stature, confronts every desire of the subject with its truth and more and more surrounds the latter, to the point of its complete elimination. Neither of these two sides can alone permanently satisfy man; thus it is the task of the present age to settle the dispute between subject and object, freedom and truth, to overcome the unbearable antithesis. All the great creative work of the last few centuries has contributed, more or less clearly, towards the solving of this problem; while the ordinary life of the day and of party conflict has rejoiced in the difference, exhausting itself with passion. Now Goethe, as we have seen, offers, in his creative work and being, a powerful synthesis of subject and object, a union of *freedom* and *truth*. While rejecting the office of a master, Goethe felt justified in calling himself a

liberator of the Germans, and of the German poets in particular, since through him they were able to realise that, as a man must live from within, so an artist must work from within, and in all his creations seek to bring to light only his own individual character. But this inner, from which all creation springs, was to him no empty subjectivity, for he understood how to bring the cosmic infinity into the soul, and to him inwardness took form only with and in the object which it appropriated, as an expression of its truth. The conflict between man and world, too, found a reconciliation in artistic creation, since here the world became humanised and man understood himself as the summit of the world. Must not such success as this be of assistance to us in the attempt to scale the heights of this problem; must it not strengthen us in our struggle against the breaking-down of life into an empty subjectivity and a soulless objectivity?

To us Germans, moreover, Goethe can be of especial significance. Fate has set us in a difficult position, no less with respect to our inner life than with regard to our external circumstances. It is our task to labour hard to discover the depths of our own nature; and while thus employed, brooding doubt easily grips and overcomes us, while the problems of existence press upon us with unbearable heaviness. In our spiritual history there are only two men of full stature to be placed by Goethe's side—Luther and Kant. Both of these were, in the first place, natures full of contrast; they intensified the great antitheses of life, brought immense stimulus into life, called us to carry out complete revolutions, and in all this made life not easier but harder. While fully recognising the immeasurable deepening of life which we owe to them, should we not at the same time welcome with joyful thankfulness the gift to us of a man of the first rank, in whom the synthetic and reconciliatory genius was predominant; a man of deep and earnest character who worked unceasingly to soften down oppositions, to effect a harmonious arrangement, inwardly to build up our existence, a man whose great experience and whose sympathetic understanding of the central problems of life could not deprive him of the joy and courage of life, a man whose inward harmony expressed itself

in a sunny cheerfulness, which, while not doing away with labour and sorrow, spiritualised and transfigured them? This has an especial bearing upon the overcoming of the antithesis of content and form, which is such a constant source of difficulty to us Germans. Nature has not provided us with a ready-made gift for form, such as is possessed by many other peoples; for us, construction in definite form costs a hard struggle, and in this task it is only too apt to occur, either that, rejoicing in the supposed self-sufficiency of our inner life, we despise form as an indifferent externalism, thereby exposing ourselves to the danger of barbarism, or that we seek to produce forms by means of mere reflection, thus sinking into artificiality, trifling and vacuity. Goethe's creative work completely surmounted this antithesis. The whole content strives towards form; he who does not make a clear appeal to the senses seems unable to speak purely to the inner man; at the same time nothing is more hated than empty forms and phrases, unsupported by inner experience; grace must proceed from complete strength alone. Here, then, we have the attainment of a full harmony; truth and beauty go hand in hand, and the figures acquire life-like power, combined with that marvellous ease which causes them to float along like clouds across the sunlit sky.

Finally, there is an especial reason, why, as children of the present day, we should preserve a close relationship to Goethe. The nineteenth century effected a great revolution in that it transferred the centre of gravity of life from the development of man, inwardly and as a whole, to the mastering of the physical and social environment—from idealism to realism, as we are accustomed to say. Goethe, who already noted the movement of a new spirit, was far from opposing the new tendency; for he had the most sincere respect for all human conflict with nature, whether by land or sea, and his interest in social matters, too, grew continually more and more intense. In fact so marked was his sympathy with this movement that he expressed his belief that the Germans would be better for "less philosophy and more active energy." But he who looked upon personality as the greatest happiness vouchsafed to the children

of this world, could not permit this sympathy to diminish the importance of shaping men to true manhood. And who can deny that this task is exposed to danger after danger, through the new development of life? A rapid revolution has disturbed the inner equilibrium of life; an activity directed towards external things more and more bears us with it and makes us the soulless instruments, the slaves of a work that presses breathlessly and unceasingly forward. The subject defends itself against this and appeals to the superiority and infinity of its feeling; but in such an isolated feeling it finds no spiritual substance and thus, in spite of its passionate character, the movement ends in emptiness. This inner division of life deprives us, however, of every barrier against the lower and pettier elements in our existence, which are ineradicable and continually in need of a fresh discipline. The little interests of individuals and parties become predominant; we fall victims to the restlessness and emptiness of a life lived only in the passing moment. In spite of all the triumphs in the visible world the level of our spiritual existence sinks. In the face of such a danger, such a necessity, there must be a rallying together of all those who stand for a stronger view of life, an alliance of all worthy men and women in the struggle for the salvation of personality, of a soul for the task of civilisation, of a spiritual substance in life. And among the poets and thinkers of the new age, who can be more helpful to us in this struggle than the man to whom ultimately the whole infinity of experience, the whole wealth of human activity, was a means of self-development, who all through his untiring activity was certain of an eternity in his own being, who raised life to a level upon which a spiritual world illumined our life with overwhelming clearness?

The close of the century has made us clearly conscious that there are most powerful impulses tending to preserve the living reality of this spiritual elevation of life. For if we ask, who of the creative minds of the nineteenth century will most assuredly continue to operate as a whole personality through the course of the ages, and who, with his own greatness, made the century great in spiritual creation—what name can be suggested other than Goethe? Therefore let us thankfully

rejoice that this place, in which he spent his life, continues to be the centre of those movements which work towards the living preservation of his spirit, and that a princely house, to which German life and character owes so much, is in the present century assisting these efforts with warm sympathy and protective encouragement.

The life of humanity moves in many currents, great and small; and those flowing upon the surface have apparently already removed us far from those values and truths which, nevertheless, examined more deeply, are seen still to surround us with living power and to elevate while they attract us.

Nay, since real greatness wrests the eternal from the movement of the ages and holds it ever up to humanity as a possession and a task, it is better to forbear from all reference to time and to take to our hearts the word of the poet:

> "Aus gestern wird nicht heute, doch Äonen
> Sie werden wechselnd sinken, werden tronen."

METAPHORS AND SIMILES IN KANT'S PHILOSOPHY

XVI

METAPHORS AND SIMILES IN KANT'S PHILOSOPHY *

Some years ago, in an article entitled "Metaphors and Similes in Philosophy" (1880), I mentioned that the manner in which great thinkers have made use of metaphors deserves more consideration than it usually receives. The matter is not adequately dealt with merely by pointing out, here and there, particularly conspicuous images and similes. For, looked at by themselves, these may seem merely accidental and not at all pertinent to the subject of discussion; whereas, in reality, the repetition and accumulation of metaphors betrays the fact that certain sensuous ideas and circles of ideas permanently accompany the thought-process. Nay, the combination of such ideas may even reveal a prospect of still greater breadth. We perceive the world that arises from the task of thought accompanied by or reflected in another kind of being, a being which, it is true, cannot claim any validity beyond airy images, incapable of being fixed without injury. But although, on the one hand, these airy images often condense to thick fogs from which we cannot extract any definite forms, yet, on the other, it frequently happens that the reflection of the thought-process in the sensuous world gives a peculiar clearness to its specific nature and structure and throws a bright illumination upon the matter that is being considered. It may even be said that the simile or metaphor, in as far as it forms a complex and enters into wider relationships, can, through its influence, drive our thoughts

* This was first published in the *Zeitschrift für Philosophie und philosophische Kritik*, vol. 83, pp. 161–193.

further, impel us towards new connections, and point out hitherto untried paths. The world of sensuous immediacy which is thus introduced into the hard struggle for truth brings with it an element of free movement, of joyous profusion, which attracts without committing, and occupies without fatiguing. Since, when the problem expands to its greatest extent, the metaphors are employed not only to aid in a more exact comprehension of individual thinkers, but also to elucidate the history of the great problems, nay, to help us to understand the philosophical task as a whole, they reveal a characteristic aspect of the whole, an aspect that cannot be neglected by any one who seeks to investigate the historical development of concepts and the work of thought in general.

In the above-mentioned essay I sought to develop the matter from a general standpoint; and this attempt could be carried a good deal further. But thus to spin out a treatment based upon philosophical principle could easily make it too heavy for a subject that is by nature slight and transitory. It is peculiarly necessary, in this case, to observe the duty of moderation. It is better, therefore, to attack the subject by studying its specific nature as shown in the case of a particularly distinguished thinker. It will not be necessary to justify our choice of Kant, if the reader bears in mind the position now occupied by the author of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Kant occupied himself again and again with the problem of metaphorical expression, although he took a somewhat broader view of the matter than that with which we are now concerned. Thus, in particular, in the *Critique of Judgment*, both when he deals with the æsthetic attributes (see Hartenstein's edition of Kant's *Works* (1867), v. 325 ff.),* and when he investigates the symbolic representation of concepts. In the latter case he expresses the opinion that, "Hitherto this function has been but little analysed, worthy as it is of a deeper study" (*Critique of Æsthetic Judgment*: trans. Meredith, 1911, p. 223. *Hart. v. 364*). Taking a particular example, Kant showed the fruitfulness of connecting the thought with a metaphor, in a treatise

* References will be given in future to this edition of Kant's works; and also, on occasion, to well-known English translations.

that is a pattern of its kind: *Was heisst sich im Denken orientieren?* With respect to his own attitude, we should not expect, in the case of the master of conceptual investigation, the pattern of stern strictness of thought, an influx of metaphors into the thought-process, and still less a thoroughgoing subconscious metaphorical character. Seldom, too, are metaphors accumulated, and it is an exception when they are made use of to develop the differences between concepts—as takes place, for example, in the case of the philosophically unimportant problem of the relationship between feeling (*Affekt*) and passion in anthropology (*Hart. vii. 572 ff.*), or when Kant demonstrates, by means of a detailed examination, the futility of a metaphor employed against him by J. G. Schlosser (*Hart. vi. 475*). All through his writings, the conceptual work perfects itself independently; it allows the metaphor to play a secondary, but not a leading rôle; it may attach itself to the argument, but must not exercise any control. Within this limited sphere, however, the metaphor is used fairly freely by Kant, more freely than a general impression might lead us to suppose. The very purity and clarity with which the philosopher works out his concepts, the iron firmness with which he welds them together to form a whole, the rigid consistency with which he carries through that which has been grasped as true—all these facilitate the fixation of metaphors, nay, the formation of enduring circles of metaphors. And it is to the latter, in particular, that we attach value. A single metaphor,* made use of upon a solitary occasion, can deserve consideration only under special circumstances; the significance grows with repetition, which increasingly assures us that the metaphor was not a passing whim. The subject first acquires a genuine value as a matter for scientific study, when the separate metaphors exhibit themselves as members of a larger circle, and the relationship of subject and simile, of the conceptual and the concrete, shows itself to be one of whole to whole, and operates as such. Now

* In this essay we shall not make any specific distinction between metaphor and simile. The latter term will be employed more especially when the subject is dealt with in a broader fashion, and that which is made use of for purposes of comparison asserts itself more independently.

it is just this which is so conspicuous in the case of Kant, as we should expect from the systematic character of his scientific work. It is certainly true that he did not care to introduce metaphors into the actual investigation—here, on the contrary, the thought-process presses continually forward, driven by its own energy, and quite without any sort of recreation or extraneous support. But when the philosopher either rapidly reviews his task before taking it up, or, after concluding an achievement, looks back upon it, he frequently calls the metaphor to his aid in order to bring that which is intended or completed nearer to the reader's immediate consciousness. Not infrequently the metaphors repeat themselves with a certain constancy and become the faithful servants of particular fundamental convictions and methodological tendencies. Looked at as such, they afford us a kind of impress or embodiment of Kant's system. To glance rapidly over this embodiment, this concrete illustration, will perhaps be of some assistance in endeavouring accurately to understand a philosopher who is at present the centre of such active controversy. In this way we may obtain a characteristic reflected view of his system, a reflection that will be all the more valuable just because it stands outside the actual work of the thought itself, and has come into being without art and without much premeditation.

Kant's literary productivity was, of course, very great, and there are naturally changes of various kinds in the use of metaphors. But for our present purpose it will suffice to distinguish between the pre-critical and the critical periods. In this connection, as in others, the former may be rated considerably lower than the latter. In its case, the metaphorical element occasionally forces its way into the conceptual work itself, and not infrequently the metaphors are borrowed from the traditional circle of ideas dominated chiefly by Leibniz; moreover that which is new and characteristic does not attain to the sharp definition and still less to the systematic construction which we value in Kant's later work. It will be necessary, however, to point out, on various occasions, that analogies that are apt to be attributed exclusively to the mature critical philosophy in reality reach back to the earlier period,

and that we thus, in this, as in other respects, perceive a close relationship between the two periods. For the purpose of our study, it will perhaps be best to begin at the highest level and to mention the less perfect portions, only, as it were, by the way.

In his best work Kant shows his independence, in the first place, in the material chosen for his metaphors. He is not afraid of employing traditional and current ideas, but he makes of these something new and deeper. It is exceedingly rare to find a close connection with earlier thinkers.*

His independence is of more importance in the tendency and application of the metaphors. Here it was essential for Kant to go to work in a characteristic fashion if he wished to remain true to his own innermost nature. In his case, it could not be the aim of the process of illustration to bring near to the understanding a world revealed by metaphysics; on the contrary, the complete abandonment of dogmatic conceptions of the world necessarily destroyed every impulse to bring fundamental forces and inner relationships of the All to sensuous representation, in the fashion still attempted by his great predecessor Leibniz with so much penetration and far-sighted care. At the same time the sphere of the metaphors undergoes a change. For since henceforth nature is converted into a system of phenomena which do no more than reflect an order and a connection which we ourselves have placed in it, there vanishes all possibility of supplementing the thought-world by analogies drawn from this sphere. Thus the task, in its entire scope, with regard both to aim and means, is transferred to the realm of human activity. It is more especially desired to cast light upon the building up of a world through the work of thought and knowledge, upon the lines of movement and the methods of this work. The means for this are again found in human activity, only

* It may be questioned, for example, whether Kant was wholly independent in his famous saying with regard to the relationship between philosophy and theology, or whether he was led to it by Ch. Wolff, who wrote: "Therefore, I am accustomed by way of joke to say: the wisdom of the world is in so far the servant of the higher faculties, as the woman would have to seek in the darkness and would often fall if her maid did not hold a light for her." (*Nachricht von seinen eigenen Schriften*, p. 536.)

upon other levels, in forms that are simpler and more obvious, or at any rate nearer to the understanding of the ordinary individual. It is not Kant's practice to draw upon things lying without; the entire work of elucidation is carried out within man's own sphere. Even when the boundary is apparently crossed, man remains fundamentally confined to himself. It is clear that in this way the relationship between the subject and the metaphor must acquire greater inwardness, and that the power of the latter to react upon the former must increase.

With this first characteristic point another is closely connected. It is hardly possible to make use of any aspect of human life by way of illustration, without saying whether this activity is to be recognised as justifiable and normal, without entering into some kind of valuation, rejection or agreement, without introducing a species of judgment into the comparison. This point acquires particular importance on account of Kant's attitude towards the philosophical position of the period, as rooted in the past. In his ultimate conviction, he placed himself sharply in opposition to everything older; for Kant maintained that his critical philosophy had the same relationship to the usual metaphysic of the schools that chemistry has to alchemy, or astronomy to soothsaying astrology. But since that which Kant looked upon as erroneous occupied the entire field of philosophy, and was, through long tradition, firmly rooted in the concepts and opinions, a bitter and lengthy struggle could not be avoided. This we may see in the metaphors. The description of Kant's own ideas is for the most part closely connected with a decisive rejection of other ideas, which are put before us in clearly outlined sketches, not always historically accurate. His attack is directed more especially against rationalistic dogmatism (*i.e.*, that procedure which, without preliminary examination of the capacity or incapacity of the reason, attempts to acquire knowledge of the supersensuous). Much less often empiricism is opposed. Now and then, too, Kant defines the boundaries that separate his thought from scepticism. Reviewing the whole, we see that the analogies are made use of more especially to illustrate the tendency and content of the process of know-

ledge. It is with this point, therefore, that our investigation must in the first place be concerned; and it will find a kind of rule of progress in gradually ascending from the more general demands and conditions of knowledge to its characteristic construction in the case of Kant. It lies in the nature of the matter that, in the first case, the repulsion of the opponent, in the second, the building up of Kant's own position, will stand in the forefront, so that this procedure will gradually lead us from a predominantly polemical discussion towards a positive representation.

Different groups of metaphors are made use of to refute dogmatism, each of which proclaims the inadequacy of the dogmatic position in some particular aspect, and indicates a demand on the part of the new mode of thought.

Dogmatism has no sound basis. Its first object, while engaged in constructive work, is to finish the structure as rapidly as possible; not until afterwards does it ask whether the foundation has been well laid (*Hart. iii. 38–9*). Such a thirst for building frequently induces the human reason to erect towers which must subsequently be taken down in order to see if the foundations are well laid (*Hart. iv. 4*). Kant demands a broad and enduring foundation; he mocks at a proof that is so delicately balanced, as it were upon the point of a hair, that even the school can keep it in position only so long as it lets the proof revolve continually, like a top, about this same point (*Hart. iii. 287*); and he finds his own task more especially in "building and strengthening the foundation of that majestic edifice of morality, which at present is undermined by all sorts of mole-tracks, the work of our reason, which thus vainly, but always with the same confidence, is searching for buried treasures" (*Crit. of Pure Reason*, trans. M. Müller (1907), p. 259: *Hart. iii. 260*). The critical examination, however, "must have been previously carried down to the very depths of the foundations of the faculty of principles independent of experience, lest in some quarter it might give way, and, sinking, inevitably bring with it the ruin of all (*Crit. of Æsthetic Judgment*, trans. J. C. Meredith (1911), p. 5: *Hart. v. 175*).

Further, however, the realm that dogmatic metaphysics,

overrating its powers, seeks to reveal to human insight, is in reality empty of content; the activity that metaphysics devotes to this end, gropes about without aim, without anything to lay hold of, and without any sort of result. This supersensuous realm, to which, according to Kant's idea, it devotes itself, appears to him as an immeasurable space, filled with the blackest obscurity, and (in particular) devoid of all content; in it there is nothing to grasp, no safe standpoints, no definite paths or roads. Nevertheless, into this vacuous space, thought attempts to wing its way: "The light dove, piercing in her easy flight the air and perceiving its resistance, imagines that flight would be easier still in empty space" (*Crit. of Pure Reason*, trans. Müller, p. 4: *Hart. iii. 38*). Thought divorced from experience is looked upon throughout as a species of flight, and the idea of its purposelessness and futility is very closely connected with this conception. Reason can do no more than impotently beat its wings. Further, in turning to the boundless and inexplorable, it must see itself cut off from all relationship with experience, and must unavoidably become misleading (*Hart. iii. 462*). Since the idea of airy height includes, in Kant's mind, the idea of insecurity and deception, height in general becomes an object of dislike and distrust. He decisively rejects the description of his idealism as a "higher": "In Heaven's name not higher. High towers and the metaphysically great men who resemble them (for much wind blows about both) are not for me. My place is the fruitful bathos of experience" (*Hart. iv. 121*). It is the business of criticism, it appears, to "cut the wings" of reason, as far as the supersensuous is concerned, and to lead it back to the realm of experience, which must show definite traces of its movement.

As compared with endless vacuity, the realm of real knowledge is looked upon as a full and limited space. It is our task carefully to define its boundaries, to fix with accuracy the horizon of our knowledge. What importance Kant assigned to this task is revealed by the fact that, even in his pre-critical period, he described metaphysics as a science of the limits of human reason (*Hart. ii. 375*). In carrying out this task, however, he does not so much attack dogmatic speculation as

empiricism. Kant contends with the greatest energy that the method by which certain questions are simply placed outside the horizon of human reason is inadequate; there must be a more accurate definition of this horizon. So long as we possess only indefinite knowledge, an ignorance that can never be wholly removed, one can never be quite sure whether certain questions do or do not lie within the human horizon; for we have been uncertain for so long with regard to our claims and possessions. What Kant desires, as opposed to this, he seeks to make comprehensible by means of a distinction between boundary and limit: "Boundaries always presuppose a space met with outside a certain definite place, and enclosing it. Limits do not require this, being mere negations. . . . Our reason, however, sees around it as it were a space for the cognition of things in themselves" (*Prolegomena*, trans. B. Bax, 1883, p. 101: *Hart. iv. 100*).

Boundaries can be recognised only when that which lies beyond is also taken into consideration; a final decision will in this case be impossible in the absence of *a priori* reasons: "All questions of pure reason refer to what lies outside of that horizon, or, it may be, on its boundary line" (*Crit. of Pure Reason*, trans. Müller, p. 609: *Hart. iii. 505*). The knowledge of the boundary, thus understood, is something positive. "But as a boundary is itself something positive, belonging as much to what is within as to the space without a given content, so it is a really positive cognition" (*Prolegomena*, as above, p. 110: *Hart. iv. 108*). It is in the first place the desire for such a delimitation of the boundary that impels towards the critique of reason. Reason occupied merely with its empirical uses, and not considering the sources of its own knowledge, is unable to satisfy the desire. Kant, however, never grew weary of emphasising the great importance of setting up landmarks in such a fashion that in the future men might know with certainty whether they were upon the ground of reason or upon that of unsound speculation (Letter to M. Herz; 24th November, 1776). He maintained the necessity of clearly distinguishing between that which we

know, and that which we cannot know. He held the firm conviction that this must lead to a great change in our definition of the ultimate purposes of our reason. How Kant pictured the result in a spatial image is seen in the following: "Our reason is not to be considered as an indefinitely extended plain, the limits of which are known in a general way only, but ought rather to be compared to a sphere the radius of which may be determined from the curvature of the arc of its surface (corresponding to the nature of synthetical propositions *a priori*), which enables us likewise to fix the extent and periphery of it with perfect certainty. Outside that sphere (the field of experience) nothing can become an object to our reason. . . . " (*Crit. of Pure Reason*, trans. Müller, 2nd edit., p. 611: *Hart. iii. 506*). But in this task we cannot cease to occupy ourselves with the necessary rational idea of the unlimited (*Unbedingt*), and, in the transcendental ideas, to direct the activity of reason beyond this circle. The transcendental ideas: "have, however, a most admirable and indispensably necessary regulative use, in directing the understanding to a certain aim, towards which all the lines of its rules converge and which, though it is an idea only (*focus imaginarius*), that is, a point from which, as lying completely outside the limits of possible experience, the concepts of the understanding do not in reality proceed, serves nevertheless to impart to them the greatest unity and the greatest extension" (*Crit. of Pure Reason*, as above, p. 518: *Hart. iii. 436*). We cannot at this point pause to consider how deeply this analogy of the space metaphor has penetrated into Kant's thought, and how far a specific, and by no means indisputable, view of knowledge here expresses itself.

In the foregoing, the sphere of dogmatic metaphysics appears as an endless, empty space; but on other occasions, in a similar sense, it is likened to an endless ocean, a shoreless sea, in which progress leaves no trace behind it and the horizon of which contains no clear goal, capable of being perceived, no matter how near we approach (*Hart. viii. 519*). In the pre-critical period, the philosopher had not given up sailing upon this ocean, provided that the example of the

capable seaman was adhered to, "who, as soon as he sets foot upon any land, tests and examines his voyage, to see if any unknown currents have altered his course" (*Hart. ii. 110*). Later, Kant came to consider the metaphysical outlook as even more dangerous, for the great and stormy ocean was now looked upon as the real *locus* of false appearance, where the voyager in quest of undiscovered land is unceasingly buoyed up with false hopes and led into peril by many a fog-bank and many a pack of melting ice with its deceitful promise of land (*Hart. iii. 209*). Therefore it now becomes his maxim altogether to avoid the high seas, and to pursue the voyage of our reason only so far as is reached by the continuously stretching shores of experience (*Hart. iii. 613*).

In addition to these metaphors, we find a wealth of other analogies brought forward to illustrate the futility and sterility of metaphysical effort. These, however, are less developed and less fixed, so that we may dispense with their further investigation. The false security and the lethargy, to which dogmatism leads, are often compared by Kant to sleep and dream: "Reason slumbers upon the pillow of a knowledge which it believes to have been extended, through ideas, beyond all the boundaries of possible experience" (*Hart. viii. 580*). Criticism, on the other hand, stands for a condition of complete wakefulness; the duty of arousing the mind falls to scepticism (Kant confessed that it was Hume who awoke him from his dogmatic slumbers).

Although, in all the foregoing, Kant decisively rejects a false, dogmatic metaphysic, he is far from wishing to give up all metaphysics. Indeed, he regards the latter as: "a science indispensable to human reason (a science of which we may lop off every branch, but will never be able to destroy the root)" (*Crit. of Pure Reason*, trans. Müller, 2nd edit., p. 726: *Hart. iii. 48*). "That the spirit of man will ever wholly give up metaphysical investigations is just as little to be expected, as that in order not always to be breathing bad air we should stop breathing altogether" (*Prolegomena*, trans. B. Bax, 1883, p. 101: *Hart. iv. 115*). It is therefore our duty to attack the matter in a new fashion; and Kant looks for salva-

tion to an essentially changed tendency of our mode of thought, a thoroughgoing transformation of the problem and of the method. When he puts the demand for methodological consideration in quite a general form; when he expresses the opinion that the use of the reason does not come of itself, like the use of our legs, by means of frequent practice; when he employs the metaphors, familiar to his age, of the plumb-line, the clue, the steersman, and so forth—this may not appear, at first sight, to be particularly characteristic, but it acquires a larger significance through the fact that Kant demanded not merely a certain consideration, a measure of orientation, but a complete reversal of the path to be pursued, a systematic definition of the guiding principles of the investigation before the work should be entered upon. We must know beforehand precisely what it is possible to accomplish and how it can be done, if the work is to be attacked with any promise of success. The determination of the method cannot, however, be left to ordinary human reason. "Chisel and hammer are quite sufficient to shape a piece of deal, but for copper-engraving an etching-needle is necessary" (*Prolegomena*, trans. B. Bax, 1883, p. 5: *Hart. iv. 7*). The new method, being opposed to the usual easy-going way, appears as a narrow gate, as a footway hitherto overgrown with sensuousness; in as far, however, as it directs itself critically towards that which stands without, it will prove itself to be a fire-ordeal, a Medusa's head. The mere fact of possessing a method obtained by scientific consideration, essentially distinguishes the critique from scepticism; the latter, for perfect safety, leaves its boat upon the beach, to lie there and rot: "Instead of which, it is my purpose to furnish a pilot, who, according to certain principles of seamanship, derived from a knowledge of the globe, and supplied with a complete map and compass, may steer the ship with safety wherever it seems good to him" (*Prolegomena*, as above, p. 8: *Hart. iv. 10*).

The endeavour adequately to secure, before taking up the discussion, the principles upon which the decision depends, takes metaphorical form in the ever repeated desire (in evidence even before the critical period) for a reliable touch-

stone. This ancient metaphor is employed, in Kant's case, in a thoroughly characteristic fashion. It appears to him absurd "to prove the validity of the touchstone, not by reference to its own nature, but through those principles which it is to be employed to test (not which are to test it)" (*Hart. vi. 4*). The deciding characteristics cannot gradually come to light as the investigation proceeds; they must be clearly established beforehand. Otherwise the investigation becomes a mere aimless groping about, or a fruitless circular movement. Therefore Kant considers it of the greatest importance that in all questions of principle the "touchstone" should first be fixed; and he is convinced that the latter can never be found elsewhere than in *a priori* principles.

If, in this way, for the purpose of asking and formulating the question the standpoint is taken up in the reason, then experience must step in for the purpose of decision, whether positive or negative; and all depends upon whether, in this case, it speaks with its real content or whether it is given a false colour through concepts that have been brought into it. In order to attain to a reliable insight it is necessary to obtain two points independent of one another and to relate these to each other. Even in his pre-critical epoch Kant finds fault with the philosophers who know how "to direct the reason, with an imperceptible biasing of the grounds of proof, (through secretly glancing aside towards the aims of certain experiences or witnesses), so that the reason *must* conclude exactly where the honest but simple-minded scholar would not have thought likely; namely by proving that which they knew beforehand had to be proved" (*Hart. ii. 366*). At the stage of the critique of reason, scientific experiment provides a pertinent analogy for the positive method of attacking the problem. According to the scientific method, reason must carry in one hand the principles, by which alone conforming phenomena can reckon as laws, and in the other the experiments that it has planned according to these principles, and thus provided, must go to nature to be instructed by her (see Pref. to 2nd edit. of *K. der R. V*: *Hart. iii. 16, 19*); and similarly it appears the task of the philosophical method "to seek the elements

of pure reason in that which can be confirmed or refuted by means of experiments."

But all these demands are only preparatory; the decisive move towards the obtaining of an entirely new basis, lies, as is well known, in the transference of the centre of gravity from objective being to the subject. This transformation is metaphorically expressed in the comparison with the work of Copernicus. The point of this comparison lies in the fact that the observed movements are to be found, in reality, not in the objects but in the observers (*Hart. iii. 20, 21*). Leibniz, too, liked to make use of this analogy of the altered standpoint, but with him it was mainly a question of clearly bringing out the comprehension of the All through thought, as compared with the sensuous perception of the mere individual; to him the point of contact in the metaphor was mainly the gaining of a world-perspective, from which everything should appear harmonious. Kant occasionally employs the analogy for this purpose; but when the object is to express the specifically new element in his own method, as in the place mentioned, then it is used, as we have seen, in another sense.

From this new standpoint there result for Kant, in the first place, two methodological demands with their corresponding means for the carrying out of the great work: in the first place a sharp separation of the elements which are different according to their essential nature and origin, although mingled according to common opinion and according to the state of traditional knowledge; and in the second place a systematic arrangement both of the separate departments and of the content of knowledge as a whole. It is easy to perceive how closely the two hang together and how each is able to assist the other; whether Kant did or did not achieve a complete adjustment of the two aspirations we will not at present discuss. This divisiveness and insistence upon sharp distinctions shows Kant in the clearest antithesis to Leibniz. While the latter sought, on every hand, to transform things through thought, while rejecting the immediate impression, in such a fashion that they form a single gradation and each separate thing represents only a particular grade of one and the same process, Kant stubbornly

insists upon the specific nature of the given. Since he allows this specific nature to assert itself with great power, the manifold elements must become clearly separated, and all that is different must become divided to the point of complete opposition. This occurs with regard to separate items of knowledge, and also with regard to whole departments, principles and sources of knowledge.

It is Kant's intention more particularly to effect a clear separation of that which originates *a priori* from that which is given *a posteriori*, of the rational from the empirical.

Since this effort is concerned with all problems and gives a characteristic form to their treatment we shall expect it to find expression in suitable metaphors. And such is indeed the case. We find, in particular, two groups of analogies. Sometimes, the different elements are represented as spatially separate within a wider circle; in this case the different fields must be delimited; care must be taken, for example, "that the boundaries of the sciences do not cross one another, but take in their proper fields, as apportioned to them" (*Hart. iv. 363*). For special faculties, as in the case of pure reason, special departments must be marked off. In this task, Kant, with his precise use of language, distinguishes between field, ground, and department. "Concepts, as far as they are referred to objects, apart from the question of whether knowledge of them is possible or not, have their field. . . . The part of this field in which knowledge is possible for us, is a territory (*territorium*) for these concepts and the requisite cognitive faculty. The part of the territory over which they exercise legislative authority is the realm (*ditio*) of these concepts, and their appropriate cognitive faculty" (*Critique of Æsthetic Judgment*, trans. J. C. Meredith (1911), p. 12: *Hart. v. 180*).

Still more frequently, however, the task is one of splitting up something that is mixed or pieced together, into its simple components, into pure elements. This search for "pure" concepts, which is peculiarly characteristic of Kant's investigation, finds its analogy in the method of the chemist and the mathematician. "What is done by the chemist in the analysis

of substances, and by the mathematician in pure mathematics, is far more incumbent on the philosopher" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. M. Müller, 2nd edit., p. 675: *Hart. iii. 554*). References to chemistry are frequently found in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (see, for example, *Hart. iii. 437*); also in dealing with practical reason, Kant recommends, "in default of *mathematics*, adopting a process similar to that of *chemistry*, the *separation* of the empirical from the rational elements" (*Critique of Pract. Reason*, trans. T. K. Abbott (1889) p. 261: *Hart. v. 169*; for a particularly detailed treatment of this, see also *Hart. v. 97*). A mingling of empirical causes determining the will, with the highest fundamental moral principle would "be to destroy all moral worth just as much as any empirical admixture with geometrical principles would destroy the certainty of mathematical evidence" (as above (Abbott), p. 187: *Hart. v. 98*). It would injure the strength and pre-eminence of reason, "just as in a mathematical demonstration the least empirical condition would degrade and destroy its force and value" (as above (Abbott), p. 112: *Hart. v. 25*).

Out of this separation and delimitation of the different elements grew the broader task, that of bringing that which has been recognised as associated into a stable order and arrangement. Kant's magnificent activity in this direction, his admirable power for bringing that which is manifold and apparently scattered into a systematic relationship, is universally known and valued. It was precisely this faculty, which, in his own opinion, led him beyond Hume; for he treated the problem pointed out by Hume, not as an isolated point, but with a systematic survey and as a whole (*Hart. iii. 509*). The transcendental philosophy, in particular, has not only the advantage, but also the duty of seeking out its concepts according to a principle, since they spring, pure and unmixed, from reason, as absolute unity (*Hart. iii. 92*). Metaphysics, rightly understood, is "according to its essence and its final purpose, a complete whole: it is either all or nothing of that which is required for its final end" (*Hart. viii. 519*). It puts itself forward as "nothing but an inventory of all our possessions acquired through pure reason, systematically

arranged" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. M. Müller, 2nd edit., p. xxv: *Hart. iii. 11*). To create a systematisation of knowledge, that is a related structure of knowledge based upon a principle, appears to Kant the chief task of reason (*Hart. iii. 437*). He rejects an unsystematic procedure, as rhapsodistic, as a mere jumbling together; in the sphere of ethics, too, he finds fault with the syncretistic age, with its "coalition system of contradictory principles, shallow and full of dishonesty" (*Hart. v. 25*).

Many different kinds of metaphors serve to illustrate Kant's aims. Two of these, in particular, exhibit a stable character, that of the *building* and that of the *organic being*. Kant calls human reason, according to its nature, architectonic, because it regards all items of knowledge as belonging to a possible system (*Hart. iii. 337*). The aggregate (*Inbegriff*) of all knowledge of pure and speculative reason appears as a building (*Hart. iii. 473*). This analogy is frequently developed even into separate ramifications.

Even in the pre-critical period Kant had demanded an examination and selection of the accumulated building material (*Hart. ii. 110*); later he added the condition that we are not to collect "rhapsodistically" a heap of knowledge for building purposes and take the material from the ruins of old broken-down structures (*Hart. iii. 549–50*). Reviewing and estimating the material, we have to consider whether we can build at all and how high we can carry our building with what we have at hand. The material for the system of the critique of reason is constituted, says Kant, of the pure concepts *a priori*, as laid down by the theory of transcendental elements (*Hart. iii. 473, 492*). Structures aiming to reach the heavens, must, he considers, fail for lack of material, "not to mention the confusion of tongues which inevitably divided the labourers in their views of the building, and scattered them over all the world, where each tried to erect his own building according to his own plan" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. M. Müller, 2nd edit. p. 567: *Hart. iii. 473*). For the shaping of the plan itself, it is more especially demanded that the discipline in question should be treated, not as an annex or as a part of

another building, but as a whole, existing for itself. Therefore the principles and methods of other departments must not be carried into it (as occurs, for example, when theological principles are introduced into science). When finished, the building must be so compact that no chinks or holes are left, and it is not necessary, "as is usual in the case of jerry-built structures, subsequently to add buttresses and supports" (*Hart. v. 7*).

However many points of contact may be offered by the metaphor of building, the union to a whole appears, in this case, as effected from without; hence the inward relationship of the structure demands a fresh expression. This is afforded by the analogy of the organic being. It must not be forgotten, however, that the concept "organic" must here be understood in the characteristic new sense which Kant first imparted to it. Previously it had been not so much the quality of inwardness as that of the purposeful association of different parts which had been determinative in this concept (with regard to the history of the concept "organic," see *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, p. 165); hence Leibniz' philosophy looked upon the organism as differing only in degree from a common mechanism, as the highest development of mechanical arrangement (*organismus cujus quævis pars machina*).

Kant, however, sharpened the difference to an antithesis, since he looked upon the organic being as one in which all the parts are reciprocally ends and means. But such a connection can hardly result from a piecing together of separate elements; it must be the product of an inner construction of the whole. In this sense, the concept of the organic has found, as is well known, an extraordinarily wide metaphorical application since the beginning of the nineteenth century, and has thereby exerted such a deepgoing (and not always favourable) influence upon scientific work that it may reckon as a classical example of the power of metaphors in science. Kant himself used it only in moderation, and apparently only in his second period. The organic is employed, first and foremost, to illustrate the mutual relationship and the completeness of the separate parts of a scientific whole. Speculative reason

"forms a true organism, in which everything is *organic*, the whole being there for the sake of every part, and every part for the sake of the whole" [as above (Müller), p. 704: *Hart. iii. 28*): there are many similar passages in the *Critique*.] The extent of the manifoldness as well as the positions of the parts amongst themselves are in this case fixed *a priori*. "Thus the whole is articulated (*articulatio*), not aggregated (*coacervatio*). It may grow internally (*per intussusceptionem*), but not externally (*per appositionem*), like an animal body, the growth of which does not add any new member, but, without changing their proportion, renders each stronger and more efficient for its purposes" (as above (Müller), p. 668: *Hart. iii. 548*). As in the arrangement of the members of an organised body, the purpose of each member can be deduced only from the complete concept of the whole.

Along with this application to rational knowledge as a whole, the metaphor of the organism is employed occasionally, but only occasionally, in political theory, in which it was later to become so influential. Kant appears to have received the outward impulse in this direction from France; at any rate he remarks in support of his own use of the image: "In the case of a recently undertaken complete transformation of a great people into a state, they have very suitably made frequent use of the word 'organisation' for the institution of magistracies and so forth, and even of the whole body of the state" (*Hart. v. 387* note). But when he understands and bases this as follows: "for each member of such a whole shall be not only a means but also at the same time an end, and, since it co-operates in the potentiality of the whole, shall be determined as to its place and function by the idea of the whole," he forgets that it was he himself who first gave this meaning to the concept. Even so it remains noteworthy that the terminology of the French Revolution, through the deepening effected by Kant, helped to introduce the metaphorical application of the concept "organic," which later became an instrument of the historical tendency of thought. In Kant's case, however, the analogy remains in general outline and does not thrust its way into the foreground of the work. It did not come to

react upon his political theory; and it could not have done so without coming into severe conflict with the ideas which were dominant in this department. Finally, it was always present to his mind that such a concept of the organic is not given from without, but originates in our own activity of reason and remains tied to this.

Although the metaphors that have been so far alluded to express essential tendencies of Kant's work and in their connection and mutual relationship indicate its characteristic general nature, yet that which is most individual and original has not yet found illustration—namely the endeavour, in a conscious advance beyond the sphere of empirical-psychical processes, to represent the possibility of knowledge through an exploration of its *a priori* sources, and to consider how there can be any justification at all for the application of the concepts of pure reason to objects. To accomplish this is the task of deduction which forms the highest point of the transcendental philosophy; from this point alone can the concepts and principles secure objective validity (in the Kantian sense); in this way alone does real knowledge become possible, for this is something much more than mere thought. We see that these two are carefully distinguished from one another: "In order to *know* an object, I must be able to prove its possibility, either from its reality, as attested by experience, or *a priori* by means of reason" [as above (Müller), p. 698: *Hart. iii. 23*]. It is a question, ultimately, not of "what happens, of the rules according to which our powers of knowledge carry on their activity and of how we judge; but of how we *should* judge; and in this case the logical objective necessity does not arise if the principles are merely empirical. . . . A transcendental deduction is necessary, by means of which the cause of judging in this particular way is sought in the *a priori* sources of knowledge" (*Hart. v. 188*). When the task is thus understood, the transcendental philosophy acquires a close relationship with law. We are no longer concerned with the gaining of a concept through experience and reflection; the new question is directed towards the legality of the gaining; deduction proves to be legitimation, the whole undertaking becomes

not so much an establishment of a state of fact as an investigation of legality; we are dealing now with a *quæstio juris*, not a *quæstio facti*.

It is in taking this turn that the investigation gives the clearest expression to the specific character of the Kantian mode of thought, and here is effected the sharpest separation from all mere empiricism. On the other hand we must not fail to recognise that this analogy, in particular, calls forth many further questions, and hence may make us conscious of the great difficulties of the undertaking. Kant looks upon pure reason as the source of all laws; for law is here the idea of a universal condition according to which a certain observed manifoldness must be set forth; and this can never be given through mere experience, but results from reason alone. Since, however, all further knowledge is subordinate to these universal conditions, reason appears to prescribe laws to nature; the philosopher who formulates these laws is "not a rational artist (*Vernunftkünstler*) but the lawgiver of the human reason."

The task of determining the rights of the speculative reason, of securing for it a possession in the face of all possible attack, takes the form, when considered more closely, of finally settling the relationship, in principle, between knowledge and experience. The traditional mode of viewing this problem, in the age of dogmatism, permitted a twofold answer, and thus led to the formation of two great party tendencies. "The principle that all knowledge begins with experience alone, which is concerned with a *quæstio facti*, does not belong to the present discussion, and the fact is admitted without hesitation. But whether it can be deduced from experience alone, as the highest source of knowledge, is a *quæstio juris*, the affirmative answering of which will introduce empiricism into the transcendental philosophy, and the negative answering of which will introduce rationalism into the same" (*Hart. viii. 536*). Now Kant shows that this party division is no accidental transitory construction, but that it is grounded in the nature of our reason and its position with regard to the objects. In undertaking a dogmatic-metaphysical comprehension of the cosmos, reason

becomes involved in a thoroughgoing contradiction, which cannot possibly be endured and yet cannot be overcome upon the ground taken up. This necessarily ensuing inner division is, as is well known, Kant's main proof of the impossibility of all dogmatic knowledge. The collapse of all attempts to enlarge our insight into the field of the supersensual, shows, according to his conviction, "not in the least that a deeper knowledge of the supersensuous as higher metaphysics teaches anything like the opposite of these opinions; for the latter cannot be compared with the former, which, as supersensuous, we do not know; but because there exist in our reason principles which to every statement extending our knowledge of these objects, sets up an opposed statement apparently just as well founded—reason thus destroying her own attempts" (*Hart. viii. 523*).

The peculiar character of this conflict indwelling in reason and the extent of its operation presses with especial force for illustration through metaphors and analogies. It is more especially the idea of legal processes and their modes of settlement which is used for this purpose; this is carried out now in one way and now in another; and if we link up the separate features we obtain a fairly connected image. From the very beginning the employment of the analogy of the legal process indicates a definite maxim for the treatment of the matter. The antithesis that is really at hand is not on any account whatever to be weakened or suppressed; here, too, is valid what Kant said on another occasion (in discussing the conflict between the philosophical faculty and the theological): "This conflict cannot and must not be set aside by means of a friendly settlement (*amicabilis compositio*), but requires, as a legal case, a judgment, that is a legal statement by a judge (the reason); for it could only be set aside through confusion, concealment of the sources of the disagreement, and false representation" (*Hart. vii. 350*). On the other hand, the struggle should not be carried on as a war, in the hope of a victory being achieved through force and power, but as a legal conflict; the goal is a legal situation, an eternal peace. And the critique is able to provide us with this, since it takes all its decisions from the basic rules of its own procedure, whose validity no

one can dispute; in this way it penetrates to the source of the disputes themselves (*Hart. iii. 500*).

The case proceeds in the following fashion. Both parties claim sole possession of the truth. The court to which they are invited to make their appeal for legal decision is that of reason. Here we produce the statements and counter-statements, "so that they may defend themselves, terrified by no menace, before a jury of our peers, that is, before a jury of weak mortals" [as above (Müller), p. 389: *Hart. iii. 338*]. And reason pronounces its verdict, not through the dictates of force but according to its own eternal and unchanging laws. Now it seemed to Kant that in matters concerning metaphysics "the case on appeal was almost ready for judgment" (*Hart. iv. 468*), and he found it to be his own task "to write down the records of this lawsuit in full detail, and to deposit them in the archives of human reason" [as above (Müller), p. 564: *Hart. iii. 470*]. In carrying this out, we see that he is especially concerned to illustrate the contrast between the attitude of the parties, who employ every means to gain an appearance of right for themselves, and the incorruptible reason, rigidly insistent upon actual truth. The parties heap up proofs, after the fashion of a political speaker who thinks that one argument will do for one set of people and another for another (*Hart. v. 522*). They take advantage of carelessness on the part of their opponents, since they are glad to allow the validity of their appeal to a misunderstood law in order to base their own unjustifiable claims upon the repudiation of the same law (*Hart. iii. 306*). They bring forward hypotheses as "reliable" witnesses, although they are nothing of the sort, because "each of them requires for itself the same justification as the fundamental idea" [as above (Müller), p. 621: *Hart. iii. 513*]. It occurs also, as Kant shows in the case of the ontological and cosmological proofs, that appeal is made to the agreement of reason and experience, as to two witnesses independent of one another, when in reality the first "changes his dress and voice in order to be taken for a second" [as above (Müller), p. 488: *Hart. iii. 413*]. If all these means prove unavailing, there remains the argument that a right has been acquired by long

usage. In all these cases the line of argument is usually not so much to bring proof of one's own position as to dispute the opposite position, as if one's own right would be strengthened with the rejection of the latter. Reason shows itself, however, to be deaf to all these artful proceedings. It insists more especially that each should proceed with his case directly—through transcendental deduction of the grounds of proof—so that it can be seen what his rational claims are able to show for themselves (*Hart. iii. 524*). But the parties cannot respond to this demand; it is soon apparent that each is strong only so long as it attacks, while the defence at once reveals its weakness. Each party can drive the other back, but no one of them can legally establish its own position. Such an observation leads reason to test the supposition that is common to both; it seeks "while watching a contest which on both sides is carried on honestly and intelligently . . . to discover the point where the misunderstanding arises, in order to do what is done by wise legislators, namely, to derive from the embarrassment of judges in lawsuits information as to what is imperfectly, or not quite accurately, determined in their laws" [as above (Müller), p. 342: *Hart. iii. 303*]. And it shows, in pursuing this task, that the right is not to be found at all where the parties are looking for it, but that a new standpoint, based upon a superior principle, must be sought. If, however, both parties, with their claims, are to be rejected by the judge, and the dogmatic use of pure reason is finally to be abandoned, this does not mean that its polemical use is to be given up.

"The case is totally different when reason has to deal, not with the verdict of a judge, but with the claims of her fellow-citizens, and has to defend itself only against these claims. For as these mean to be as dogmatical in their negations as reason is in her affirmations, reason may justify herself *κατ' ἄνθρωπον*, so as to be safe against all damages, and win a good title to her own property that need not fear any foreign claims, although *κατ' ἀλήθειαν* it could not itself be established with sufficient evidence" [as above (Müller), p. 593: *Hart. iii. 493*]. This fact acquires peculiar importance in its application to practical reason, with whose specific nature we shall very shortly be occupied.

Since in the sphere of theory the critique confines knowledge to the very narrow department of the objects of possible experience, while at the same time exhibiting the *a priori* conditions of experience, it allows reason to retain a possession which is certainly reduced but is indisputable, a property that can no longer be challenged. The conflict that has been described preserves reason "from the slumbers of an imaginary conviction, which is often produced by a purely one-sided illusion" (*Hart. iii. 293*). "To deny that this service, which is rendered by criticism, is a *positive* advantage, would be the same as to deny that the police confers upon us any positive advantage, its principal occupation being to prevent violence, which citizens have to apprehend from citizens, so that each may pursue his vocation in peace and security" (Müller, p. 698: *Hart. iii. 22*). Should, however, the question of legal justification direct itself against the *a priori* functions themselves, then Kant replies: "There is also an original acquisition (as the exponents of natural law express it), and, in consequence, an acquisition of that, also, which previously was not in existence at all, and had nothing to do with this case" (*Hart. vi. 37*).

If, according to the foregoing, the sphere of speculative knowledge appears to be the arena of unceasing feuds, the situation is different in the practical region. Here reason (by virtue of the idea of freedom) is in possession, and the legal claim, even of common human reason, to freedom of the will, bases itself upon the consciousness and the admitted presupposition of the independence of reason from merely subjective determinative causes (*Hart. iv. 305*). Here, therefore, those who make a positive assertion may lay the burden of proof upon their opponents, and since they are quite certain the latter can never produce proof, they can be equally certain of their own possession. "Where determination according to natural law ceases, all explanation ceases, too, and there remains nothing save defence, that is repelling the objections of those who claim to have seen further into the true nature of things and therefore bluntly declare freedom to be impossible" (*Hart. iv. 307*). "As against our opponent . . . we are always ready with our *Non liquet*. This must inevitably confound our adversary, while we need not mind

his retort, because we can always fall back on the subjective maxim of reason" [as above (Müller), p. 596: *Hart. iii. 495*]. In accordance with all this, practical philosophy is to expect help from the theoretical in the way of obtaining peace and security for itself against external attacks, which seek to render insecure the ground upon which it is building itself up. In particular, the apparent conflict between nature and freedom is to be done away with; for in case the work of investigation leaves it untouched, "the theory upon this point is *bonum vacans*, and the fatalist can take possession of it with a good show of reason, expelling all morality from its supposed (but titleless) estate" (*Hart. iv. 304*).

The metaphor of the legal process is used with pleasure by Kant in other ways, besides in this principal application. Thus, for example, in the *Conflict of the Faculties*, in the problem of the Theodicy, in the polemic against Eberhard, and so forth. In each case we note the inclination to treat a conflict raised to a higher plane as a legal question. In the case of the above chief problem, instead of a legal process, the closely related analogy of a duel conducted according to definite rules is not infrequently employed. The dogmatic parties are the combatants, reason the impartial umpire; the course of the duel is characterised by the fact that—in the case of the apogogical mode of proof that is here customary—each combatant has the advantage so long as he attacks, and loses it as soon as he fights defensively. Thus he who has made the last attack appears as the victor. This metaphor is usually employed in a very general way, and only occasionally is it carried out more in detail. Thus we have, for example: "In order to be completely equipped you require the hypotheses of pure reason also, which, although but leaden weapons (because not steeled by any law of experience), are yet quite as strong as those which any opponent is likely to use against you" [as above (Müller), p. 624: *Hart. iii. 515*]. Or the uselessness of the attack is illustrated, as, for example, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Müller, p. 607: *Hart. iii. 503*), where we read: "The shadows which they are cleaving, grow together again in one moment, like the heroes in Valhalla."

In the case of such a duel, Kant has in mind the idea of a legal condition ultimately to be realised. In this simile, too, we note the influence of the legal idea. Such a far-going and penetrating application of this idea is characteristic not only of the theoretical conception of the task; the whole is also *ethically* vitalised and warmed by the fact that the goal of the critique of reason is looked upon as the production of a secure legal condition, the rejection, without room for appeal, of all unjustifiable claims. For our philosopher, who repeatedly called justice the apple of God's eye upon earth, who was stirred by nothing so much as by injustice, and who believed that, "If justice be defeated it is no longer worth while for man's life on this earth to continue," the work of scientific investigation could not be raised higher, in a moral sense, than in looking upon the service of truth as a struggle for justice.

Since our previous treatment of the subject has been concerned principally with the general philosophical procedure, theoretical philosophy has naturally occupied the foreground. But we must not omit to note that in the field of practical reason, too, numerous metaphors are to be found. In this case they do not combine to form such definite groups; but nevertheless, in the main, they serve a common purpose, which is to make as clear as possible the sharpness of the moral antithesis, the inadequacy of all external assistance, the necessity for the putting forth of all our powers. It is rather general fundamental views and valuations than a systematic construction which it is here sought to illustrate and impress. It thus becomes easily explicable that the metaphors here employed are more closely related to traditional and popular ideas than those made use of in the sphere of theory. Fundamentally, they are more characteristic of Kant the man, than of Kant the philosopher. For this reason we can afford to dispense with a further examination. But a single example will serve to show with what minute conscientiousness Kant proceeded, in this case also. It is a question of illustrating the opposition between man's inherent nature and the moral law. For this purpose he uses a comparison with a crooked piece of wood from

which nothing straight can be made (*Hart. iv. 149 ; vi. 198*). But in order that this may be comprehended with perfect exactness, the philosopher feels himself called upon to explain the concept "crooked" (*krumm*) by distinguishing it from the concept "slanting" or "askew" (*schief*) (*Hart. vi. 491 ; vii. 30*). In the case of the crooked, we are concerned with the inner nature of the lines, in the case of the slanting, with the position of two lines to one another. Therefore, in making use of the concept "crooked," the opposition to the moral law is made to appear as an inward thing, and not as a product of outward circumstances.

At the close we may be permitted to recall the manner in which Kant gives metaphorical expression to the general result of his work.

In the pre-critical period he employed the image of the circle returning upon itself to represent the completeness of the investigation (*Hart. ii. 204*) ; and in the retrospect we read (*Hart. viii. 562*) that the pure reason "in describing the circle of its horizon, possesses—as such—an unlimited range and sweep. It can thus project itself out of and beyond this 'bourne of time and space' into the supersensual sphere. In so far however as it operates within this earth sphere, it is 'cribbed, cabined and confined' *either* by canons of morality, of which it gains cognizance by virtue of its own inner light, *or*, by the effect produced upon it by its knowledge of theoretical dogmas, which as these constitute part of a formal system of morals, thus acquire a practical dogmatic validity within the area of its earthly orbit. Hence it is that the pure reason perpetually recurs to a final aim (τέλος) and this takes the form of the highest good to be wrought and sought for within the present posture of things," * (*Hart. viii. 562*). Further, however, we read that the critique of reason turns upon two hinges : the ideality of space and time and the reality of the concept of freedom. "Both hinges are equally contained in the totality of all conditions subordinated to one another" (*Hart. viii. 573*).

* This free translation of an exceptionally difficult and obscure passage in Kant, has most kindly been supplied by the Rev. W. S. Macgowan, M.A., LL.D. (author of "The Religious Philosophy of Rudolf Eucken").

Reason is summoned to return from its high flights into the supersensuous regions: "We found that although we had thought of a tower that would reach to the sky, the supply of materials would suffice for a dwelling-house only, sufficiently roomy for all our business on the level plain of experience, and high enough to enable us to survey it" [*Crit. of Pure Reason* (Müller), p. 567: *Hart. iii. 473*].

If such a limitation as this should excite objection, Kant is able to reply: "He who marks out rocks, has not therefore placed them where they are" (*Hart. viii. 763*). In reality, however, he believed that the loss affected only the monopoly of the schools and did not in the least hurt the interests of humanity (*Hart. iii. 25–6*). Moreover, it is not intended that the precedence assigned to the practical reason should lead to an idle passivity on the part of the theoretical. The latter has not done its work once for all; for since the germ of the errors that it destroys lies in the reason itself, and the illusion it battles against is natural and unavoidable, its task is a constant one; ever anew error will show itself, and ever anew we shall have to put forth effort to force it back. Philosophy remains ever armed (against those who confuse the phenomena and the things-in-themselves), and is a constant accompaniment of the activity of reason. It is true that conflict as to comprehension is not a state of war, but in times of peace, too, the powers of the subject (who is placed in apparent danger by the attacks made upon him) should always be kept in training. Philosophy should work for the continual vivification of man and for the warding off of the sleep of death (*Hart. vi. 493*). The system of pure reason must be "continually inhabited and kept in sound repair, if spiders and sylvan spirits (who will never fail to seek refuge here) are not to occupy the building and to make it unfit for reason to inhabit" (*Hart. viii. 573*). "The speculative restriction of pure reason and its practical extension bring it into that *relation of equality* in which reason in general can be employed suitably to its end, and this example proves better than any other that the path to *wisdom*, if it is to be made sure and not to be impassable or misleading,

must with us men inevitably pass through science" (*Crit. of Pract. Reason*, trans. Abbott, p. 261: *Hart. v. 147*). Thus far Kant.

It will perhaps be of some interest to consider Kant's use of metaphors independently of the thread of his general trend of thought, which we have just been following; and, as it were reversing ourselves, to take up our position not in the thoughts which the metaphors are employed to illustrate, but in the departments of life drawn upon for metaphorical purposes. In this way we come to ask which spheres of general human culture, which of the interests of the age, which aspects of social and practical life, and so forth, presented themselves more especially to his mind as suitable for his purposes. We should, for example, see in what fashion he made use of the political thoughts and values of his time, in what a characteristic way, if for the most part only lightly in passing, he introduced ideas drawn from commercial life into his expositions, how gladly he turned to astronomy for assistance in illustrating his principles, and so forth. But all this is significant rather of Kant's individuality than of his philosophy; it would be valuable in other connections than those with which the present discussion is concerned.

Let us content ourselves, therefore, with casting a look backwards. Our investigation was not concentrated upon a single result and therefore cannot conclude with such an one. Its endeavour was to give a cross-section of the whole, as seen from a standpoint that is usually overlooked. This aim has been attained if the manifold material has consolidated itself to give a certain unity, and thereby to some extent to illustrate the characteristic mode of thought, the intellectual character, of the great philosopher.

At first sight, the metaphors employed by Kant seem somewhat commonplace and uninspiring; it may even appear that they do not contain much that is significant or new. But the more we follow them out, the more we pursue their connection with the leading ideas, the more their characteristic nature becomes apparent, the more we become convinced that they serve new ideas and that in this service they themselves acquire

a meaning different to that which they have conventionally possessed. The tremendous transformation which is accomplished in the work of Kant, a transformation that penetrates every element and affects even the most immediate aspect of things, is witnessed precisely by the different use, the different accomplishment and the different appearance of that which is commonplace and lies close at hand. Such an independent shaping of the simple forms is the surest token of real greatness.

With regard to the tendency in which the metaphors are employed, it is obviously dogmatism, in its rationalistic form, against which they are more especially directed. From this standpoint, the opposition to rationalism may be reckoned as the predominating element, and an inclination towards empiricism may seem to be revealed in the rejection of the former. But a more detailed study must make it clear that both the choice and the development of the metaphors announce a decided movement away from all empiricism; one needs only to recall the fixation of boundaries, the gaining of a touchstone preceding all investigation, the analysis into pure elements after the fashion of chemistry, the systematic construction corresponding to the idea of the organism, and above all the selection of the legal metaphor. In all the foregoing, the activity of reason presents itself as guiding and decisive. Kant's alienation from empiricism seems to be rather greater than less than that from rationalism. Although the philosopher places himself in opposition to the latter, in the manner in which he answers the questions, the fact that he selects them at all and the way in which he puts them proclaim the unbridgeable gulf that separates him from all empiricism, even of the most refined description. His criticism is far rather a movement within rationalism (in the widest sense of the word) against dogmatism, than an approach to empiricism. If Kant opposed himself less severely to the latter, this was not because he felt himself more in harmony with it, but because an empirical method does not touch the problem with which Kant was predominantly occupied. If it be true that men come most violently into conflict with that which is near to their own position, the

conflict itself becomes a witness of inner community. It is true that in this reasoning we must not place Kant too near to rationalism, in the customary sense of the term. Precisely the metaphors themselves may reckon as a part proof of the completely characteristic nature of his thought. With their independence and force of conviction they are able to bear witness, in the presence of conflicting interpretations, to the thoroughly characteristic nature of the great critical philosopher, incapable as this nature is of being brought under any general concept.

BAYLE AND KANT

XVII

BAYLE* AND KANT

A Study

FATE has dealt in a peculiar way with Bayle's influence and the valuation of his work. His writings, and the *Dictionnaire* in particular, made an immense impression upon his contemporaries; the leading intellectual circles—at that time the Courts rather than the Universities—were intensely excited by them; they stimulated Leibniz to the production of his most popular work; the greatest monarch of the age of the Enlightenment proclaimed himself, both at the beginning and at the end of his reign, a disciple of Bayle's, and in the midst of all his many occupations found time to make an extract from the Dictionary, which appeared in 1765 and 1767.†

Then, however, Bayle fell very much into the background, his place being taken by the later leaders of the Enlightenment. He was looked upon as a mere forerunner, although in reality he possessed much that was characteristic. Finally the reaction

* PIERRE BAYLE: b. 1647, d. 1706. Brought up as a Calvinist, Bayle became converted, in his youth, to Roman Catholicism; but returned, soon after, to Calvinism. After holding the chair of philosophy and history at Rotterdam for some years, Bayle was forced to resign in 1693, on account of his opinions. He published, amongst other works, a critique of Maimbourg's *History of Calvinism*; his great *Dictionnaire* (dealing with history and criticism, enlarged edit. 1702; edit. by Maizeaux in 4 vols., 1740); and *Nouvelles de la république des lettres.* See *Les œuvres de Bayle*, 3 vols., The Hague.

† For further details of Frederick the Great's relationship to Bayle see Zeller's admirable work *Friedrich der Grosse als Philosoph*, in particular pp. 16–19.

against the Enlightenment affected him, too; and when, in the nineteenth century, occasional students called attention to him, and so prominent a man as Feuerbach took up his cause, a proper valuation and an adequate knowledge of the man were still lacking; and even now we may say that there is a lack of grateful recognition.*

For this fate, the man himself and the character of his writings cannot be held free from blame. Whatever may be the truth, however, in this respect, historical justice demands a proper valuation of this thinker; and it is all the more necessary to insist upon this, as his problems are not yet out of date.

We have already occupied ourselves with Bayle,† and it is unavoidable that the present study should, to a slight extent, cover the same ground. But the present point of view is a different one. In the former case, it was our first concern to throw a certain measure of light upon the man's attitude towards religion (which was peculiar, and at first sight almost incomprehensible); but in the present study, it will be our aim to keep in mind his intellectual character as a whole, the inner construction of his thought. In the latter case, the first necessity must be the accurate establishment of that which distinguishes and separates Bayle's thought from common scepticism. We can hardly follow his ideas, however, without becoming aware of certain approximations towards Kant. When we fix Kant's position we most easily perceive both Bayle's greatness and his limitations. Conversely the juxtaposition may serve at the same time to throw light upon the specific nature and the superior character of the Kantian point of view; it may thus be regarded also as a contribution to the study of Kant, although there will be but little direct mention of him.

* Brunetière says (*Rev. d. deux mondes*, 1892, August; p. 614): *Je ne crois pas qu'il y ait, dans toute l'histoire de notre littérature, un exemple plus singulier de l'ingratitude ou de l'injustice de la postérité que celui de Pierre Bayle.*

† See my *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, pp. 186–206: *Pierre Bayle, der grosse Skeptiker: eine psychologische Analyse* ("Pierre Bayle, the great Sceptic: a psychological analysis").

In attempting to solve this task it is imperatively necessary to keep clearly before our eyes the difference between a sceptical and a critical mode of thought both in the theoretical and in the practical spheres. The sceptic denies all possibility of a positive knowledge, all science in the proper sense of the word, since he confines human thought wholly to sensation, with its relativity and its unceasing change. At the same time it becomes his peculiar task and joy to attack and destroy the appearance of dogmatic knowledge in the opinions of mankind, and in particular of the learned; and in the performance of this task his wit and acuteness enjoy brilliant triumphs. Similarly in the practical realm he recognises no good other than the useful and the agreeable; the aspiration does not in this case get beyond pleasure, with its individual differences and unceasingly changing nature. Values like fixed principles and duties necessarily disappear, being looked upon as the mere illusions of an overstrained metaphysics or a brooding pedantry.

Quite otherwise is it with the critical philosopher. He holds fast to knowledge; he will not let go of the idea of the good; he believes in the working of some kind of reason within human existence. But this reason seems to him exceedingly difficult of attainment; only under particular conditions and within certain limits is it accessible. Here, too, there must be a struggle against human vanity, a destruction of every false appearance of knowledge. But the struggle for truth no longer seems hopeless; although it demands from men much hard labour and much resignation. The way towards affirmation leads through a bitter negation, but the belief in a final affirmation is firmly retained in the midst of all negation; and if, in this case, the sphere of human capacity undergoes severe limitation, we feel all the more confident in the secure possession of that which remains.

This not only makes the work deeper and richer in content; it results (as compared with scepticism) in a totally different type of life. The sceptic is careless and light-hearted; he is satisfied with unceasing movement; his life acquires great facility and takes on the form of an entertaining amusement.

Internal tension, on the other hand, lends to the critical type of life a great earnestness; here we find a severe wrestling with resistances; here, life is no matter for amusement but a difficult, although ultimately fruitful, work.

Nothing exhibits the great gulf between these two modes of thought so clearly as their fundamentally different attitudes towards the social environment. The sceptic, knowing no positive truth and having no inner conviction at stake, ends, in spite of all his wit and mockery, by adapting himself to his environment and comfortably swimming along with the current of the age. His higher claims upon truth will, however, cause the critical philosopher to break with his environment and to set but little value upon its opposition. The sceptic Montaigne was beloved in all quarters and remained on the best footing with the Catholic Church; while the critic Bayle was in constant conflict, and was compelled, for the sake of his convictions, to leave his fatherland and his family.

When we consider these inner differences and remember that the sceptical and the critical elements are in Bayle's case associated and interwoven, we shall not be surprised at the resulting complications. But at the same time the solution of the problem promises to be peculiarly interesting; for we cannot do justice to Bayle without separating and individually valuing the different tendencies which, as they first reveal themselves, are often fused together. It is in this way that we shall become clear as to what separates Bayle from Kant, and what permits us to regard him as a forerunner of the great critical thinker.

In this connection, theoretical and practical philosophy afford different views. Let us begin with the theoretical. As a sceptic, Bayle here followed, in essence, the traditional path; he made use of the arguments which have been current since the days of Grecian scepticism; for example, he insists upon our seeing things, not in themselves (*les objets en eux-mêmes*), in their "absolute nature," but only in relationship to ourselves, that is to the isolated individuals, with their inexhaustible diversity and their ever-changing situations. There is not one, common, and uniting truth; but as many truths as there are

men, and this individual truth * is conceived of, in ever varying fashion, according to the momentary psychic states, bodily conditions, and so forth. At the same time, however, there are indications of a new method. Original, for example, is the image of the perspectives, of the different points of view (*point de vue*) from which we see the things, and arrange them, according to our nature, in this or that fashion. A specifically modern spirit is in reality revealed by the thought (which is put forward with peculiar emphasis) that we grasp ourselves, and our own condition, through our ideas and opinions, and are therefore by no means free of error even in that which seems fully certain and immediately at hand.† We think of our wills as free; but it by no means follows that they are so in reality.‡ Our convictions are not our full property in the sense in which we fancy them to be; often we do not so much believe, as believe that we believe (*ils croyent ou ils croyent croire*). This saying—which, by the way, seems to occur only once in Bayle (article "Socinius"), was probably handed down by Lichtenberg to the nineteenth century, when it became a favourite catch-phrase.

That we deceive ourselves often and deeply, with regard to ourselves and others, is due, in the first place, Bayle asserts, to the dependence of our intellects upon our interests, a view which (in common with the French moralists of the end of the seventeenth century) he defends in a multitude of ways.§

The interests of individuals, of sects, and of peoples are, however, different, nay often in mutual opposition; our judgments will accordingly vary very widely; we shall regard a

* See *œuvres divers* (henceforth referred to as *o.d.*) II, 222*a*: *La verité ne peut agir si elle ne devient particulière, et pour ainsi dire, individuelle. C'est donc l'idée particulière de chaque homme qui est à chacun sa verité.* We quote from the 3rd edit. of Bayle's *Dictionnaire*, and from the 1726 edit. of the *œuvres*.

† *o.d.*, III, 781*b*: *nous sommes sujets à des fausses idées de ce que nous appartient effectivement.*

‡ *o.d.*, III, 661*b*: *la preuve du franc arbitre tirée de ce que nous sentons que notre âme est douée de liberté n'a rien qui convainque.*

§ See, for example, *o.d.*, II, 128*b*: *le cœur ne se voulant point rendre fait que l'esprit qui est ordinairement sa dupe, cherche des armes pour se maintenir.*

certain thing as right when useful to us, and wrong when injurious to us; the same conduct will be regarded fundamentally differently according to whether it is practised by our friends or our enemies (*cf.* for example, *o.d.*, II. 176*b*).

Bayle sought to demonstrate this predominance of subjectivity more particularly with reference to the treatment of history and thereby arrived at a *Pyrrhonisme historique*.* In the easiest way, through small alterations, historical occurrences are capable of being interpreted in entirely different ways; moreover historians tell us, not so much what took place in reality, as what was said amongst the various peoples and parties with regard to the events.†

The emphasis laid upon the subjectivity of historical reports appears in its true light when compared with the entirely uncritical mode of thought of his age. Bayle stands out as the pioneer of a historical criticism; there is no doubt that he powerfully influenced Voltaire's treatment of history, and the latter speaks of a *Pyrrhonisme de l'histoire*. Bayle's service to historical criticism is indeed worthy of a more detailed description and valuation.

The dependence of our judgment upon our interests, which is the main cause of the conflict and insecurity, appears at the same time as an insurmountable obstacle to the progress of truth and enlightenment. For the interests and needs of human society remain essentially the same in all ages; they are not dependent upon the degree of enlightenment. Thus we may not hope that superstition will ever disappear, or that reason will ever rule in human affairs.‡

* Of particular importance in this connection are the introductory remarks to the *Critique of the History of Calvinism* by Maimbourg (in the second vol. of the *o.d.*).

† *o.d.*, II, 10*a*: *comme par la seule transposition de quelques mots on peut faire d'un discours fort saint un discours impie, de même par la seule transposition de quelques circonstances l'on peut faire de l'action du monde la plus criminelle l'action la plus vertueuse.* 10*b*: *je ne lis presque jamais les historiens dans la vue de m'instruire des choses qui se sont passées, mais seulement pour savoir ce que l'on dit dans chaque nation et dans chaque partie sur les choses qui se sont passées.*

‡ In particular, see the article upon Francis of Assisi in the *Dict.*, 1206*b*: *Il y a dans l'église Romaine plusieurs abus qui selon toutes les apparences*

Bayle, however, did not direct his scepticism merely against the customary routine of life or against historical tradition; he found scope for its employment in his treatment of modern science, and especially of the current philosophy of the age. Descartes, overthrowing the whole traditional content of knowledge, made the quality of being *evident*, with its clearness and distinctness, the criterion of truth. Bayle, however, brings forward serious doubts as to the reliability of this criterion; he cannot overlook the subjectivity which is contained in the concept of evidence. All parties have alleged that their assertions were evident; and moreover false ideas often seem evident to us. On the other hand, we must part with much truth that is indispensable to us if we regard as true only that which is evident. When, however, the criterion of truth thus gives way, when we find no secure hold either within or without, does not the very possibility of any knowledge of truth disappear? *

Thus scepticism increasingly strengthens its hold. It seems impossible in any way to escape from it. Bayle never fully overcame this difficulty on the theoretical side; it is always ready to break out afresh, and clings to the whole work of his thought. At the same time there must be something more in the man than mere scepticism. Under no circumstances could his life-work have so consolidated itself to a whole, and become so penetrating, if positive convictions had not taken root in him, if men's minds had not been moved by his earnest

durerent aussi longtemps qu'elle. On aura beau passer d'un siècle savant à un siècle plus savant; ces choses là ne changeront point. Il est vrai, qu'elle sont nées dans les siècles d'ignorance; mais l'ignorance n'était point la seule cause, ni même la principale cause de leur formation. Les besoins d'une communauté, tant pour se nourrir que pour se loger commodément, l'intérêt que l'on avait à montrer aux peuples un autel bien décoré et de riches ornemens d'Eglise; tout cela voulait que l'on fit des descriptions ravissantes des privilèges d'un certain saint, et d'une certaine chapelle et d'une certaine fête. Or les besoins dont je parle ne sont point sujets aux vicissitudes de la lumière et des ténèbres, ils sont de tous les tems; ils sont les mêmes sous un siècle d'ignorance, et sous un siècle de science.

* See, in particular, the article "Pyrrhus" in the *Dictionnaire*, 2307: *s'il y avait une marque à laquelle on put connaître certainement la verité, ce serait l'évidence: or l'évidence n'est pas une telle marque, puis qu'elle convient à des faussetés.*

struggle for truth. But how was such a conflict possible in the absence of some sort of belief in truth, some hope of truth? As a matter of fact, in the midst of all his scepticism, Bayle did not lose such a belief, a belief in an actual truth (*sachliche Wahrheit*), proceeding from the nature of the things themselves, and independent, not only of human opinion, but even of the will of God. He expressed his inmost conviction when he said: "As the just live by faith, a philosopher, too, must live by his faith; he, too, cannot allow his judgment of things to be dependent upon what other men think" (*œuvres divers*, III, 237*a*). With all his skill and ingenuity, man can do nothing, finally, against truth; ultimately everything that is dependent upon falsehood will collapse.* From the standpoint of scientific method, therefore, only those fundamentals are sound which are derived from the object itself, never those which represent the thought and opinion of man. From the standpoint of such a conviction, Bayle strongly attacks "the authority of the greatest number," the usual procedure of counting the votes rather than weighing them (in connection with Pliny's saying, *Numerantur sententiæ, non ponderantur*), and for his part demands the opposite method. More especially in the case of historical and dogmatic truth does he feel the majority method to be inadequate. Such statements ring with a note of genuine personal conviction. For Bayle himself was in a minority in his own country; and this minority must frequently have endured the experience of being forced to give in to the majority. Only an appeal to a truth superior to the opinions and desires of men could afford any adequate protection against such an oppression.

But Bayle, naturally, could not leave his conviction in this merely general form. It became necessary in some way to convert it into work. This took place through an energetic concentration upon formal logic, to which a very high value was assigned, its principles reckoning as irrefragable. In this

* See *o.d.*, I, 455*b*: *Souvenons nous de cette parole de S. Paul: "Nous ne pouvons rien contre la vérité." Cette sentence est aussi vraie à l'égard des vérités de la nature, qu'à l'égard de celles de la morale et de la révelation. Nos artifices, nos fraudes pieuses, tous les detours de notre prudence se trouvent enfin trop courts, quand on les emploie pour le mensonge.*

case Bayle never made use of any sceptical arguments. Such a conviction is in harmony with Bayle's method; in the spiritual conflict logic is to him a main weapon; it gives him pleasure to reduce the discussion to formal syllogisms, thereby undermining his adversary's position. A peculiarly useful method of approaching truth is, in Bayle's opinion, clearly to separate and effectively to bring to recognition, those general principles which are so easily concealed behind the peculiarities of the individual cases; in this way, in particular, we shall be able to advance beyond the party standpoint.* It will be shown later how this method is greatly strengthened, in the moral sphere, by objective considerations.

On the theoretical side, Bayle employs a characteristic scientific method upon which he places complete confidence. This is an analytical procedure, which sorts out that which is confused, sharply emphasises contrasts, and at the same time obtains a number of important positive principles. It corresponds with the general nature of Cartesianism; but in many of its details we have no difficulty in recognising Bayle's own characteristics.

It is the contrast of the imperfect and the perfect, and of dead nature and living spirit, which supplies the basis for his conviction of the existence of God.† A second point upon

* See *o.d.*, II, 168: *On pourrait recourir à une méthode plus facile, qui est de réduire les principes particuliers des matières que l'on traite, à des principes plus généraux, car par ce moyen on peut entreprendre les disputes opposées sans faire aucun préjudice aux dogmes que l'on a déjà établis.*

† *o.d.*, III, 333*a*: *Je ne vois guère qu'une bonne route philosophique pour leur conversion. C'est de poser d'abord pour principe que rien d'imparfait ne peut exister de soi-même, et de conclure de là que la matière étant imparfaite n'existe pointe necessairement; qu'elle est donc été produite de rien; qu'il y a donc une puissance infinie, un esprit souverainement parfait qui l'a créé. On arrive par là sûrement et promptement à la religion.*

Further, 340*a*: *N'est ce pas de toutes les choses inconcevables la plus inconcevable que de dire qu'une nature qui ne sait rien, qui ne connait rien, se conforme parfaitement aux loix éternelles, qu'elle a une activité qui ne s'écarte jamais des routes qu'il faut tenir, et que dans la multitude des facultés dont elle est douée, il n'y en a point qui ne fasse ses fonctions avec la dernière régularité? Conçoit-on des loix qui n'aient pas été établies par une cause intelligente? En conçoit-on qui puissent être exécutées régulièrement par une cause qui ne les connait point, et qui ne sait pas même qu'elle soit au monde? Vous avez là metaphysiquement parlant l'endroit le plus faible de l'athéisme.*

which special emphasis is laid is the distinction between material and immaterial substances, the energetic rejection of materialism. Among the proofs for a unity of the soul, superior to all combinations of matter, one is of peculiar interest, namely the totality of the object as viewed by the unity of the perceiving subject,* a thought which shows a relationship with Kantian lines of argument. Further, Boyle had no doubts with regard to the multiplicity and manifoldness of things, and in so far inclines to the atomists, while he sharply differs from those *Unitaires*, who, like Giordano Bruno and Spinoza, saw only a single substance in nature. This method of penetrating analysis, with its marked selection of distinctions and oppositions, is further illustrated by the judgments passed upon other thinkers. Bayle is throughout in opposition to those who are facile in the combination of opposite opinions, who would bring about, in particular, an everlasting compact between theology and philosophy; while he cheerfully welcomes everything which gives prominence to the individual peculiarities of the things themselves and hinders an amalgamation. Like all other thinkers of any importance, Bayle has a characteristic conception of the history of philosophy.

We perceive, in all the foregoing, a positive type of thought, which, with all its fineness, caution and reserve, is far removed from mere scepticism.

Just at this point, however, we come, in Bayle's case, to the greatest complications. He cannot increase our demands upon knowledge, as he does, without coming into contact with immense difficulties and in some way having to reckon with these. Certain central points seem to be secure, but they do not join together to form a whole; and it is above all things intolerable that at important points we must set up and retain assertions, without being able to refute the objections which rise up

* *Dict.*, Article "Leucippe," 1701*a*: *il ne résulterait de cette capacité aucun acte de connaissance, et pour le moins ce seraient des actes de connaissance fort différens de ceux que nous expérimentons; car ils nous représentent tout un objet, tout un arbre, tout un cheval, etc.; preuve évidente que le sujet affecté de toute l'image de ces objets n'est point divisible en plusieurs parties, et par conséquent que l'homme autant qu'il pense n'est point corporel ou matériel ou composé de plusieurs êtres.*

against them. Or again, in the case of serious problems, there may be only a limited number of possibilities, and on a closer examination none of these may show themselves to be practicable. Bayle does not so much discuss these questions in general as attack them in the case of particular problems, which occur again and again and thus make a most lasting impression. In this connection he is chiefly occupied with the problems of the freedom of the will and of the origin of evil; but he brings forward a number of other questions, not so directly connected with religion and morality, and he considers it of importance to lay down the principle that the complication does not first take its origin in the relationship of reason to religion, but that it falls itself within the sphere of reason—that the contradiction is within reason itself.* Although it is in accordance with the unsystematic character of our philosopher to confine himself to individual problems, these problems are nevertheless of such central importance, or their consequences are of such significance, that their treatment brings with it a view of human knowledge as a whole. Thus Bayle, all the while suggesting general views in connection with particular instances, often occupied himself with the question of the psychic life of animals, which seemed to him to involve an insoluble dilemma. On the one hand animal psychic life presents all the qualities which are at the basis of the independence of soul life as compared with corporeal life; and should we understand this as a result of mere material influences, we can hardly refuse to grant a similar consequence in the case of man. On the other hand, if we grant animals an independent soul, it will not be easy for us to reject the idea of the immortality of this soul, an idea which we are accustomed to regard as impossible of acceptance.

* *o.d.*, IV, 23*a*: *l'opposition entre la révélation et quelques maximes de la raison n'est pas plus à craindre que l'opposition qui se trouve entre les maximes de raison. On s'abuserait grossièrement si l'on croyait que notre raison est toujours d'accord avec elle-même; les disputes innombrables dont les écoles retentissent sur presque toutes sortes de sujets prouvent manifestement le contraire. La raison est une foire où les sectes le plus diamétralement opposées vont faire leur provision d'armes; elles se battent en suite à toute outrance sous les auspices de la raison, et chacun rejette quelques-uns des axiomes évidens.*

Similarly, nay with a still more penetrating criticism, Bayle discusses the fundamental concepts of natural philosophy, the problems of matter, of extension, of movement—the very same problems which modern physical science places in the foreground. Thus, for example, the infinite divisibility of matter. Our thinker demands this and yet at the same time leaves us unable to solve the objections which suggest themselves. Yet this inability does not prevent him from accepting infinite divisibility as an evident proposition (*o.d.*, III, 1062*a*). The problem of extension is handled in a thorough fashion. How can we in any way conceive of an extended thing? Does it consist of mathematical points, or of atoms, or of infinitely divisible parts? Whosoever affirms one of these positions may indeed carry on a successful conflict against his opponents; but he cannot establish his own thesis. Finally the thought forces itself upon us that the extension does not exist at all outside, but is in our own thoughts alone. And this satisfies Bayle that extension is illusory. The concepts of time and movement offer difficulties at least as great; and mathematics, too, and particularly geometry, are looked upon as entirely uncertain, not being occupied with anything corresponding to a reality outside our minds.*

The question arises: What consequence are we to draw from all this confusion and complication? Must we abandon those doctrines against which irrefutable objections are raised? This is not Bayle's opinion; he holds that there are doctrines which we must retain although we cannot overcome the opposing arguments. To recognise the proofs of a doctrine as inadequate, is not to give up the doctrine itself. The situation becomes more difficult when assertions directly contradictory to one another claim equal truth. A more exact examination then shows, with ease, that each of these assertions possesses an

* See *o.d.*, IV, 855*b* (from a letter to Des Maizeaux): *Elles* (*i.e.*, mathematics) *ne roulent pas sur des abstractions; elles supposent qu'il y a réellement hors de notre esprit des superficies sans profondeur, et des lignes sans largeur, et des points sans aucune dimension. La plupart des démonstrations géometriques sont fondées sur cela; d'où il s'ensuit que ce ne sont que de beaux et brillans fantômes, dont notre esprit se repaît; c'est-à-dire, une suite d'objets évidens, à quoi rien n'est semblable existant hors de notre esprit.*

advantage in attack and a disadvantage in defence. For in the first case it benefits by all the difficulties which resist the opposing views; while in the latter its own difficulties assist its opponents. Or, expressed in other words, the indirect proof by refutation of the opposing theories is as easy as the direct establishment of the thesis to be proved is difficult. It thus follows that to carry on a philosophical conflict it is necessary only to change one's standpoint, to proceed from defence to attack; and that the material for conflict will never be exhausted.*

When all the foregoing is taken into account the struggle for truth assumes a very unpromising appearance. Again and again the matter becomes a mere party affair; again and again that which we thought secure becomes insecure. Our reason seems prepared to support any and every assertion; it is like a fair where each may purchase what he will, or a runner who never rests; it is much better adapted for refutation than for proof, for destruction than for construction; it may be compared to Penelope, who unravelled by night what she wove by day; it is incomparably more proficient in showing what things are not than what they are.†

* *Dict.*, 2478*b* (article "Rorarius"): *une secte terrassée, mise en déroute, n'en pouvant plus, trouve toujours les moyens de se relever, dès qu'elle abandonne le parti de la défensive, pour agir offensivement par diversion et par rétorsion.*

† From the innumerable passages in which this view finds expression we may select a couple: *o.d.*, III, 778*b*: *Si la raison était d'accord avec elle-même, on devrait être plus fâché qu'elle s'accordât mal aisément avec quelques-uns de nos articles de religion, mais c'est une coureuse qui ne fait où s'arrêter, et qui comme une autre Penelope détruit elle-même son propre ouvrage: "diruit ædificat, mutat quadrata rotundis"* (Horace); *elle est plus propre à démolir qu'à bâtir, elle connaît mieux ce que les choses ne sont pas que ce qu'elles sont.* Further: *o.d.*, IV, 42*a*: *Ceux qui ont bien étudié le dictionnaire de Mr. Bayle, y ont remarqué facilement ces deux caractères, l'un qu'il établit constamment toutes les fois que le sujet le comporte que notre raison est plus capable de réfuter et de détruire que de prouver et de bâtir; qu'il n'y a presque point de matière philosophique ou théologique sur quoi elle ne forme de très grandes difficultés, de manière que si on voulait la suivre avec un esprit de dispute aussi loin qu'elle peut aller, l'on se trouverait souvent réduit à de fâcheux embarras; qu'il y a des doctrines très certainement véritables qu'elle combat par des objections insolubles; qu'il faut alors se moquer de ces objections en reconnaissant les bornes étroites de l'esprit humain ff.* See also IV, 23*a*, and the *Dict.*, 700*b*.

We find ourselves confronted, then, with the remarkable doctrine of a contradiction within reason itself. Kant attacked this problem in systematic fashion; he sought to unearth the source of the contradiction and at the same time to win a standpoint secure from all scepticism. Through his criticism of reason, his exact limitation of human capacity, he believed himself finally to have overcome all scepticism. Bayle, on the other hand, does not get beyond the establishment of the fact of a contradiction. He thus unavoidably finds himself in a desperate position; * his critical procedure cannot guard against the influx of a sceptical mode of thought; his affirmation always retains something unreconciled, subjective, forced. We cannot indeed be surprised that its genuineness was frequently doubted. In reality, however, a thoroughly individual thinker like Bayle has the right to be valued according to his own nature, and from this point of view we can easily understand his position. He was indubitably in earnest in his conviction that it was not necessary to reject a doctrine because certain objections to it could not be refuted.† It remains obvious throughout that his chief strength was in attack and in negation. He is never more brilliant than when called upon to deal with academic science.‡

* He was himself deeply conscious of this. In the *Dict.*, 2143*a* (Ovid), he gives a moving account of man's inner struggle: *les choses les plus opposées, la lumière et les tenèbres ne se quittent point dans l'homme, elles s'entresuivent en lui, elles se talonnent: moins on sait, plus croit-on savoir; plus on sait plus sent-on son ignorance, plus s'expose-t-on à s'écarter du droit chemin.*

† *O.d.*, IV, 764: *ne pouvoir pas répondre à des objections n'est point pour moi une raison de rejeter une doctrine.* See also IV, 42*a*, where he describes himself as follows: *il pousse vivement une objection, il la fait même briller, si l'on veut, mais ce n'est pas un signe qu'il condamne le dogme, qu'elle combat;* see further, 45*b*.

‡ A Mephistophelian quality is revealed by the sarcastic passage in the *Nouvelles lettres* (1739), I, 293: *Le meilleur parti à prendre dans la philosophie, c'est de s'attacher d'abord à la scholastique, d'accoutumer son esprit aux chimères des universaux et aux abstractions de métaphysique, et après de voir les systèmes de physique ancienne et moderne. Il suffit de savoir l'histoire de la philosophie, c'est-à-dire, ce que chaque secte dit, car du reste il y a presque autant d'incertitude dans les unes que dans les autres. Quand vous serez en logique, sachez-le bien quelque dégoûtante qu'elle soit, il suffit de se persuader qu'elle a ses usages, et surtout quand on veut-être bon théologien; quand vous serez en physique, donnez-y toute votre attention, mais oiez toujours en vûe l'état de précepteur, par où je crains bien qu'il faudra passer; afin que cela vous oblige d'apprendre beaucoup de choses: car le monde*

We cannot rightly judge Bayle's specific character unless it be considered in connection with the highly peculiar and complicated situation of his age. A new mode of thought had arisen, making the inadequacy of the traditional position of knowledge fully clear. A critical and rational method came into the sharpest conflict with the scholastic method, which mingled together historical authority and logical argument, and, in particular, sought to amalgamate theological conviction and philosophical proof, believing itself to have proved with an elaborate dialectic that which was operative from the beginning as a presupposition.* This artificial construction, full of contradictions, now began to be shaken; but the power of construction was very far from being equal to that of disintegration. The crumbling-down unavoidably spread from the point at which it began to the foundations themselves, and endangered the general position of reason. This had the effect, in particular, of causing men to remain largely bound, in the very fundamentals of their thought, to the same ancient elements which they so sharply repudiated. Nowhere is this seen with greater clearness than with respect to the fundamental concept of truth itself. The inner complications of the matter forced our thinker to take up the idea that quantities, nay, whole departments of life, which up till then had seemed to lie outside the mind (such as extension, and the geometrical truths), in reality have no outside existence.

This reflection might have induced him to seek a new kind

se laisse plûtôt coiffer au nombre des choses qu'on peut enseigner qu'au talent qu'on peut avoir à en enseigner bien une.

* Bayle justly emphasised that in this scholastic work philosophy was by no means merely a handmaid of theology; see especially *o.d.*, II, 368*a*: *Tous les théologiens, de quelque parti qu'il soient, après avoir relevé tant qu'il leur a plû la révélation, le mérite de la foi, et la profondeur des mystères, viennent faire hommage de tout cela aux pieds du trône de la raison, et ils reconnaissent, quoiqu'ils ne le disent pas en autant de mots (mais leur conduite est un langage assez expressif et éloquent) que le tribunal suprême et qui juge en dernier ressort et sans appel de tout ce qui nous est proposé, est la raison parlant par les axiomes de la lumière naturelle, ou de la Métaphysique. Qu'on ne dise donc plus que la théologie est une reine dont la philosophie n'est que la servante, car les théologiens aux-mêmes témoignent par leur conduite, qu'ils regardent la philosophie comme la reine et la théologie comme la servante; et de là viennent les efforts et les contorsions qu'ils livrent à leur esprit, pour éviter qu'on ne les accuse d'être contraires à la bonne philosophie.*

of reality within the mind, to follow the path which Kant pursued with such success. But the thoroughly unsystematic Bayle was not able to do this ; * he remained true to the old concept of truth, which understood, by truth, an agreement of our ideas with a reality situated outside ourselves (*adæquatio intellectus et rei*) ; from this point of view to attribute a thing to the mind alone seemed equivalent to declaring it merely imaginary. At this point, and beyond this point, we have obviously to do with the contradictory character of a time of transition. The subject has more sharply separated itself from the environment ; it confronts the things in independent reflection ; it sees them more and more receding from itself. If, at the same time, it will not give up the idea of an appropriation, if it insists upon a full agreement with them, then a contradiction is obvious, and a movement towards radical scepticism becomes unavoidable. Such a development must occur more especially in the case of such a man as Bayle, in whom refinement and strength of feeling far exceeded creative impulse and capacity ; in such a case as his there could be no thought of solving this enormous complication, but only of in some way adjusting oneself to it, and this adjustment will hardly have much significance outside the individual. But in spite of all such limitations, we must not allow ourselves to forget how important was the service which Bayle rendered in bringing the matter into a state of flux and energetically placing the problems in a position of prominence. It is true that he did not, like Kant, open up a new world from the standpoint of the subject ; but he enormously strengthened the latter and thus helped to prepare the way for Kant's great work. In the sphere of theory he found his solid ground in the forms of thought ; he did not consolidate them to a whole, as Kant did later (thus taking up the struggle against the world, and from this point reversing the appearance of the latter) ; but in his general aspiration, as well as in important special points, we cannot fail to recognise a certain connection with Kant.

* He describes his own method as follows (*o.d.*, IV, 744*b*) ; *étant un auteur sans consequence, qui ne prétend à rien moins qu'à dogmatiser ; je donnais carrière à mes petites pensées tantôt d'une façon, tantôt d'une autre.*

The relationship of the two men to one another in the sphere of morals is closer than in that of speculation. Bayle may very well be regarded as a precursor of Kant, both with respect to the content of morality and to its valuation as the fixed core of life, although at the same time we must not overlook important distinctions. In the case of morality, too, a sceptical and a critical element are operative together with Bayle, but their relationship is no longer the same, and the scepticism shows itself in another direction; it does not attack the basic principles, but concerns itself with the capacity of morality in human affairs.

A scepticism which extended to principles would declare all morality to be an illusion, recognise no motive force for conduct other than the pleasure and pain of individuals, and tolerate no such quantities as law and duty. But no one could be further removed than Bayle from such a mode of thought. For he asserted with the greatest energy, affirming it again and again, that there existed a good-in-itself beyond the realm of utility, and that certain actions are in themselves beautiful or hideous.* This moral element in man cannot have been produced by mere education and habit; it is not a product of social life; such an explanation, so Bayle considered, was valid only for the special application of morality, and not for the basis of conscience or for certain ideas which are common to all peoples.† This valuation of conduct comes rather from a moral consciousness dwelling in our innermost nature, from the conscience; it is true that this conscience, too, comes from God, but it is independent of the positive religions. Bayle fought, in many different ways, for the non-dependence of morality upon religion.

* See, for example, *o.d.*, III, 114*b*: *la raison, sans la connaissance de Dieu, peut quelquefois persuader à l'homme qu'il y a des choses honnêtes, qu'il est beau et louable à faire non pas à cause de l'utilité qui en revient, mais parceque cela est conforme à la raison.*

† In the *o.d.*, III, 709*b*, it is shown that moral laws should not be based upon an agreement of the various peoples, but that in their case it is our duty *de consulter les loix de l'ordre et les idées qui nous découvrent les principes de la morale.*

See *o.d.*, I, 671*b*, where Bayle discusses a work with the tendency of which he is obviously in agreement.

He took a lively interest in attempts wholly to separate morality and religion (such as were already being made at that time).* He inclined to the opinion that morality is essentially the same in all religions; and he maintained that in religion the principal matter is morality. Goodness and holiness are invariably regarded in popular belief as the main qualities of the Divinity, the *optimus* precedes the *maximus* (*Jupiter optimus maximus*); without holiness there is no Divine blessedness and perfection.†

Thus in religion we must look upon those who follow the moral teaching it prescribes as the true believers. Under the influence of such convictions, Bayle opposed, in the most decided fashion, all attempts to depreciate morality in favour of positive religion. This is peculiarly clear in his treatment of Old Testament personalities, who are often set up as models of moral perfection lest their religious position should be endangered.‡

* He occupied himself, for example, with Martin Knutzen, who proclaimed a morality independent of religion, and obtained a host of followers (*conscientiarii* "*Gewifsner*"): *Dict.*, 1618*b*: *Les folies de cet Allemand nous montrent que les idées de la religion naturelle, les idées de l'honnêteté, les impressions de la raison, en un mot les lumières de la conscience, peuvent subsister dans l'esprit de l'homme après même que les idées de l'existence de Dieu et la foi d'une vie à venir en ont été effacées.*

† *o.d.*, III, 320*b*: *une science et une puissance infinie sans la sainteté ne rendraient point Dieu heureux.*

‡ Thus in nearly all the *Dict.* articles upon these personalities. It says, for example, of David, 964*b*: *le profond respect que l'on doit avoir pour ce grand roi, pour ce grand prophète, ne nous doit pas empêcher de désapprouver les tâches qui se rencontrent dans sa vie; autrement nous donnerions lieu aux profanes de nous reprocher, qu'il suffit afin qu'une action soit juste qu'elle ait été faite par certaines gens que nous vénerons. Il n'y aurait rien de plus que cela à la morale Chrétienne. Il est important pour la vraie religion, que la vie des orthodoxes soit jugée par les idées générales de la droiture et de l'ordre.* 965*a* we read further: *J'avoue qu'il n'y rien là qui ne soit conforme aux préceptes de la politique et aux inventions de la prudence; mais on ne prouvera jamais que les loix exactes de l'équité et de la morale sévère d'un bon serviteur de Dieu, puissent approuver cette conduite.*

Still more severe are his remarks upon Sarah, 2540*b*: *Ils* (the Church Fathers) *ont sacrifié les intérêts généraux de la morale à la reputation d'un singulier; et peu s'en faut que je n'applique à tous ceux qui sont animés de cet esprit le bon mot de Cicéron: Urbem philosophiæ proditis dum castella defenditis.* In this case, as in many others, Voltaire did no more than pursue the paths struck out by Bayle.

No less is his scorn directed against the practice on the part of the churches of judging dogmatic irregularities much more severely than moral laxity, nay, he asserts, of tolerating vices while severely punishing errors in belief. From a detailed discussion of this subject (in the *o.d.*, III, 126*b* ff.) we may quote the following passages: "Jansen was a man of the utmost moral strictness, and he gave due submission to the church, but he was not allowed to enjoy in peace the praise of his epitaph, because it was asserted of him that he held incorrect views on the subject of predestination." "If it was known in Rome that some Huguenots were gathered together in order to worship God according to their convictions, proceedings of the severest possible kind would be taken against them and against the place where they met. On the other hand no one says a word against the courtesans who have for so many centuries publicly carried on their venal trade in this, the premier city of the world." And in another place he says: "If Galileo, instead of playing the part of a Copernican, had kept a few concubines, no one would have troubled to disturb him!"

But in what consists the morality which Bayle puts so high above everything else? In the first place, the foundation of morality is parallel with the foundation of logic; just as there are certain unchangeable laws for thought, there are such laws for acts of the will. The most universal of these laws is that man must always will that which is in agreement with true reason;* according to the decision the action will be beautiful or ugly; virtue has a natural and inward righteousness (*honnêteté*). This formal thought, however, acquires definite content and emotional warmth in that this agreement with true reason reveals itself, on a closer examination, as fairness, as equal justice for all.†

That the idea of justice, and not that of love or of humanity, should be the guiding principle of morality, imparts a specific

* *o.d.*, III, 406*a*: *conforme à la droite raison*; see also III, 415.

† *o.d.*, 368*b*: *Je veux dire que sans exception il faut soumettre toutes les loix morales à cette idée naturelle d'équité qui aussi bien que la lumière métaphysique illumine tout homme venant au monde.*

character to all Bayle's efforts to give a moral shape to social life; it lends a peculiar warmth to his struggle against the injustice which he and his fellow-believers had to endure; finally, it allows us to look upon him as a precursor of Kant.

At the same time, the elevation of equal justice to the position of chief principle of morality is not, for Bayle, an abstract doctrine; it is the true expression of his own being and aspiration. Living in the midst of the bitterest struggles, he sought to practise equal justice in every direction, and always to recognise with impartiality that which was worthy of recognition, while censuring all that deserved censure. He certainly had no reason to be biased in favour of the Jesuits, but he took them, too, under his protection when they were unjustly attacked, and could be sarcastic at the expense of their attackers: "The Jesuits have suffered the same fate which overtook Catiline: complaints have been made against them which could not be proved, but which were based upon the following general argument: because they have done a certain thing therefore they are quite capable of having done this or that other thing, and it is hence as clear as possible that they must have done the remaining things!" (*Dict.*, 1741, article "Loyola"). Bayle mentions, not without pleasure, some of the mocking remarks of the free-thinkers (*esprits forts*), but that does not prevent him from seeing through and censuring the element of vanity in their attitude: "Vanity," he declares, "plays a greater part in their disputes than does conscience" (*Dict.*, 989). Errors on the Protestant side, too, he unhesitatingly reproved. Thus Bayle was able to say of himself with good reason: "I could not forgive myself a sin against justice and rectitude (*droiture*); I would be my own judge and prosecutor, and it would be impossible for me to believe without pain that anyone believed me guilty of such a sin" (*o.d.*, IV, 773*a*; from a letter to Ancillon).

Now justice, and with it morality in general, appears to Bayle to be an idea inherent in the soul from the very beginning; it is looked upon as the content of the conscience, which judges our actions in a manner superior to the interests and inclinations of the individuals. This conscience, this inner

light, was regarded by Bayle as the most certain thing in life.*

Naturally, Bayle did not overlook the wide differences between individuals and peoples with respect to moral judgment; but while a sceptic would have regarded this as evidence of the lawless subjectivity of all moral judgment, Bayle throws his whole energy into the rejection of such a conclusion. It is, as a rule, the fault of men themselves when the natural light of their conscience becomes darkened, whether because they do not seek it with whole-hearted earnestness, or because they allow their selfish interests to render themselves blind to it. In the face of all such errors there remains the fact that the most general moral laws are recognised by all civilised peoples.†

A certain incidental confusion and insecurity here results, not so much with regard to the principles, as in the case of their application, which easily falls under the influence of the particular situation and of selfish interests. For there is here an essential distinction between speculation and morality. In the first case, the principles themselves are uncertain; in the second, it is their application which is more especially responsible for the confusion.‡

* We may here quote at any rate one or two of the numerous passages referring to this point: *o.d.*, II, 370*a*; where Bayle speaks of the *lumière vive et distincte qui nous accompagne en tous lieux et en tout temps*: *o.d.*, II, 368*b*; where we have, *lumière primitive et universelle que Dieu répand dans l'âme de tous les hommes*: II, 439*a*; *à l'égard de la connaissance de nos devoirs pour les mœurs la lumière révelée est si claire que peu de gens s'y trompent, quand de bonne foi ils cherchent ce qui en est.*

† *o.d.*, III, 407*a*: *il me suffit que les règles les plus générales des mœurs se soient conservées presque partout, et que pour le moins elles se soient maintenues dans toutes les sociétés, ou l'on cultivait l'esprit.*

‡ See the very noteworthy passage: *o.d.*, III, 87*b*: *Que l'homme soit une créature raisonnable, tout qui il vous plaira, il n'en est pas moins vrai qu'il n'agit presque jamais conséquement à ses principes. Il a bien la force dans les choses de spéculation, de ne point tirer de mauvaises conséquences, car dans cette sorte de matières il peche beaucoup plus par la facilité qu'il a de recevoir de faux principes que par les fausses conclusions qu'il en infère. Mais c'est tout autre chose, quand il est question des bonnes mœurs. Ne donnant presque jamais dans des faux principes, retenant presque toujours dans sa conscience les idées de l'équité naturelle, il conclut néanmoins presque toujours à l'avantage de ses désirs déréglés.*

This being the condition of things, the chief means for clarification and security, wherever the matter has become doubtful, is the separation of the matter from the peculiarities of the individual instance and its reduction to general principles; the truth will now be revealed to us with full clearness.* We must "look at the matter in a broad and general way and apart from our own special interests and the customs of our fatherland" (II, 368*b*).

Ultimately, therefore, the conscience, this light dwelling in the innermost part of the soul, is the safe touchstone for conduct (this image of the touchstone (*pierre de touche*) is a very favourite one with Bayle). In the interpretation of the Bible, too, we must be guided by the principle that nothing must contradict the commands of the conscience. Only let us cling in moral questions to the simple and natural impressions and refrain from disputations after the fashion of the Jesuits.

"Dispute as much as you like about logical questions, but in dealing with morality be content with simple common sense (*bon sens*) and with the light that is spread by the reading of the Gospel in the spirit. For if you begin to dispute in the scholastic fashion you will soon be unable to find your way out of the labyrinth" (*Dict.*, 1744, article "Loyola").

But with all his reliance upon the conscience, Bayle cannot deny that it is capable of error, that even an honest search does not provide complete security against such error, that there is a mistaken conscience (*conscience erronée*). This would seem to bring us near to scepticism; but here again Bayle resists the temptation. He digs down a stage deeper into the human soul and feeling. Even if conscience should err in its result, there remains the honest aspiration towards truth, conscientiousness itself.

We cannot get beyond that which appears to us as truth. "They may twist and turn as they like, they will put no certainty into their affair other than the certainty of their

* *o.d.*, II, 369*a*: *Je crois que cette abstraction dissiperait plusieurs nuages qui se mettent quelquefois entre notre esprit et cette lumière primitive et universelle, qui émane de Dieu pour montrer à tous les hommes les principes généraux de l'équité pour être la pierre de touche de tous les préceptes.*

own conviction; this is, they will never show that it is certain that they possess the truth, but only that they believe themselves to possess it" (*o.d.*, II, 56*b*).*

Although this subjective certainty means but little in the realm of speculation, it is fully satisfactory here, where it is all a matter of right feeling; we may be convinced that we act rightly and so as to please God, when we perform with complete devotion, that which our best conviction tells us to be true. Thus finally there remains an absolute good in the midst of all division and contradiction; there is a point to which man can retire to take refuge from all his confusion, and this point is the conscientiousness of his own feeling. Hence the subjective element, which otherwise appears to fall away from truth, here acquires in itself an irrefragable truth.

That which gives man firmness and confidence in himself, must also compel him to genuine tolerance with respect to others. For one conscience is as good as another, and no one has any right to force his conviction upon another: "It is an attack upon the right of the Divinity to attempt to force the conscience."†

So far Bayle travels along the road of the Enlightenment; he gives a peculiarly brilliant expression to its valuation of the conscience as the revelation of God common to all, as the most fixed point in life, as the touchstone of all conduct. Then, however, comes a point where the roads go entirely apart; namely upon the question of the moral condition of humanity. It was in accordance with the main tendency of the Enlightenment not to put too high an estimate upon the difference between what was demanded and what was attained; man appeared to be filled with good intentions, and his shortcomings were looked upon rather as the consequence of pardonable weakness than of any direct resistance, and, in particular, as

* See, for example, *o.d.*, II, 438*b*: *dans la condition où se trouve l'homme, Dieu se contente d'exiger de lui qu'il cherche le plus soigneusement qu'il pourra et que croyant l'avoir trouvée, il l'aime et y règle la vie.* 441*a*: *il suffit que la conscience d'un chacun lui montre non pas ce que les objets sont en eux mêmes, mais leur nature respective, leur verité putative.*

† See *o.d.* II, 77*b*: *c'est un attentat assurément contre les droits de la divinité que de vouloir forcer la conscience.*

a result of inadequate knowledge. All progress in connection with conduct appeared therefore to depend upon an improvement in knowledge. So the men of the Enlightenment thought, and so they had to think, in order to solve the complications with the means at their disposal.

Bayle, however, was of a very different opinion. In the first place he was convinced that men do not act according to general propositions and principles but according to impressions and feelings: "It is not the general opinions formed by reason which determine our conduct, but the passions which fill the heart at the time being." *

"It is one thing to expatiate upon beautiful maxims and ideas; it is quite another to apply these to the ordinary affairs of our existence. Beautiful maxims are like the summits of mountain ranges far removed from wind and wet; but their application takes place upon those lower levels where it thunders, snows and rains" (IV, 539*b*).

"We are too cool when reason is our sole motive force" (II, 281*a*). "It is natural impulse which at present possesses the ruling power. One day its kingdom will cease, and then religion and reason will rule over human conduct" (II, 274).

Convictions of this kind fill Bayle with a profound mistrust of the capacity of all didactic principles and theories. He places no confidence in political systems: "The passions of human nature which grow out of one another with inexhaustible fertility, will soon destroy all the hopes based upon these excellent systems" (*Dict.*, article "Hobbes," 1479*b*).

More eagerly still does he combat the influence of religious doctrines upon human conduct: "The great motive force of human conduct consists not in belief in the commands of religion, but in the nature of the heart and its desires. Religious belief is not the rule for human behaviour" (III, 92*b*). "The

* See *o.d.*, III, 89*b*: *Il ne sont pas les opinions générales de l'esprit, qui nous déterminent à agir, mais les passions présentes du cœur;* see further III, 87*a*, 116. Boyle finely describes the gradual overthrowal of reason; see III, 521*b*: *la raison ne peut tenir contre le tempérament; elle se laisse mener en triomphe, ou en qualité de captive ou en qualité de flatteuse. Elle contredit les passions pendant quelque temps, et quis elle ne dit mot, et se chagrine en secret, et enfin elle leur donne son approbation.*

heart does not become pure, through a mere conviction of our mysteries " (III, 94*b*).

" The origin of immorality is not found in lack of belief" (III, 102*b*). " Religion is not a curb, which is capable ot holding in the passions " (III, 105*b*). It thus becomes comprehensible that however much men may differ in their religious opinions, in conduct they are as similar as so many drops of water, and this for the simple reason that no one lives according to his principles (see, for example, III, 401*b*).

In addition to this ineffectiveness of general opinions we must take into account the fact that the natural impulse is nothing other than limitless self-love, and that in the face of its power, considerations of justice and righteousness have no ability to assert themselves. " The true principle of human conduct is nothing other than temperament, natural tendency towards pleasure, the tastes which people have for certain things, the desire to please some one, a custom acquired through intercourse with friends, or some other disposition, which springs from the basis of our nature, in whatever land a man may be born and with whatever knowledge his mind may have been stuffed " (III, 88*a*).

If, in the face of this, morality, with its principles, appears stripped of all power, the matter becomes still more complicated from the fact that, as things are, we could not possibly get along without self-love and passion : " If one were to deprive men of their errors and prejudices, one would render them useless for the purposes of this earth " (II, 286). And this is valid in particular for the continuance of human society. " It is this instinctive love ; it is blind love ; it is this love, independent of reason, which maintains society " (II, 273*a*).

When Bayle ponders over all the complications which result from this state of affairs, and in particular when he considers the amount of humbug and vanity which is exhibited in all our human activities, he is compelled to regard man as unspeakably little. He reverses, therefore, Pliny's saying as to the greatness of nature being revealed in the little (*cum rerum natura nusquam magis quam in minimis tota sit*), and observes that of man the opposite can be said, namely that

he is never smaller than in the case of the most distinguished minds. What a contrast to the doctrine of the greatness of man (*grandeur de l'homme*) which was soon to intoxicate the French Enlightenment!

The complications and contradictions which here thrust themselves upon us, are, however, made still more acute by the influence of religion. The main task of the latter is the moral purification of man, and we have seen how little it really accomplishes in this direction. Nay, religion threatens, on the other hand, to enhance the evil which it sought to overcome. Upon its soil the human passions flourish with peculiar luxuriance; the most dubious actions seem justifiable when they take place in the name and interest of religion; false weights and measures are never more actively made use of than in religious conflicts. Each is here both judge and prosecutor in his own person, each is here inclined to attribute to the other the worst actions and the most ridiculous motives; the same religious community will change both in spirit and in principles according to whether or not it obtains the upper hand; heresies are found where one wishes to find them; they are produced by the act of oppression. Nothing therefore injures justice, the fundamental principle of morality, more than religion does. Bayle exhibits peculiar energy in attacking the Christian Church along these lines, since the gentleness and peacefulness which are inherent in Christianity should give rise to a very different kind of conduct. "Christian charity certainly possesses very remarkable privileges. It acts in the same way as injustice and hatred without ceasing to be the greatest of the virtues; *sunt superis sua jura*" (I, 688*b*). He reproves "the injustice of the Roman Church which describes as fury and frenzy everything that the other religions do against it, and praises, as piousness and holy zeal, that which it does against the others" (II, 87*b*). He is particularly energetic in coming to grips with St. Augustine, whose *compelle intrare* was a favourite watchword of the persecutors of Bayle's period. Making use of the most exact knowledge of the man, alike in his greatness and in his weakness (and few understood the whole character of St. Augustine as Bayle

did),* Bayle followed up his avenues of thought, showed up the contradictions involved therein, and exposed, in particular, the serious injustice which consistently "converts a given action from a crime to a virtue solely according to whether it is performed in the service of religion" (II, 451*b*). Those who desire to understand the psychology of Ultramontanism should study Bayle; they could find no better orientation and no richer mine of information. Comprehensible, too, is his excited tone in those unworthy persecutions whose leaders made a pretence of religion while they served political ends, which were a comedy for the persecutors and a tragedy for the persecuted (II, 348*a*). But that at which Bayle aims is not so much Roman Catholicism in particular, as all dominating and power-seeking religion; he does not fail to perceive the general character of the danger. "One cannot avoid saying that certain errors of the sects do not pertain to them as sects, but in as far as they rule" (*Dict.*, 2804*b*, article "Vergerius"). He complains of the dogma of intolerance, "which is maintained universally by all Christian sects with the exception of those who are themselves always in need of tolerance. They preach tolerance in the countries where it is necessary to them, and intolerance in the countries where they are in power" (*o.d.*, 179*a*).†

"God protect us from a Protestant inquisition; after five or six years it would be so terrible, that men would long for the re-establishment of the Roman inquisition" (IV, 667*b*).

It was not, however, against the Church in the narrower sense of the word only, that Bayle brought forward the charge of inner contradiction and untruthfulness, but against the whole Christian society. And the state of affairs at the time fully justified his position. The age thought in a thoroughly worldly fashion, while at the same time giving itself an appearance of Christian feeling; the truth of the Christian doctrines

* It would be well worth while if the relationship between Bayle and Augustine were made the subject of a special investigation.

† See also IV, 859*b*: *la prevention c'est la passion qui les anime. L'homme est homme partout.*

was not doubted,* but men did not live according to them; it was the age when the modern concept of honour entered into life and education with especial strength, and when, at the same time, men could not do enough in the way of religious devotion. Bayle finds the most offensive element in this pretentiousness to be the inclination to compensate for moral defects with an ostentatious religiosity. A profound immorality extended through all relationships, but it was thought possible to escape its consequences through religious exercises and formulæ.† "Men make the most artful use of the appearance of piousness and of the pretence of honouring God, in order to extract that which they desire from other people" (I, 579*a*).

One cannot peruse these statements of Bayle's without thinking of Kant's *Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (*Religion within the Limits of Pure Reason*), and in particular of the last portion. In his rejection of all attempts to replace morality by an outwardly religious mode of life, Kant is hardly less severe than Bayle. But in the case of the latter, the anger springs far more from the actual experiences of the age, and therefore his statements bear a much more objective and individual character.

Finally, in Bayle's case, the whole conception of human life must become very dismal, for he is entirely lacking in any hope of better times, in any belief in a progressive perfection of humanity. Human impulses and passions will, he thinks, remain essentially the same in all ages, and they, and not

* *o.d.*, III, 97*b*: *ceux qui doutent de la divinite de la religion Chretienne et qui traitent de folie ce qu'on dit de l'autre vie, sont en très-petit nombre.*

† *o.d.*, III, 92*b*. Belief gives rise to: *un je ne sais quel zèle pour la pratique des cérémonies extérieures dans la pensée que ces actes extérieures et la profession publique de la vraie foi serviront de rempart à tous les désordres, où l'on s'abandonne et en procureront un jour le pardon.*

III, 101*a*: *croire que la religion dans laquelle on a été élevé, est fort bonne, et pratiquer tous les vices qu'elle defend, sont des choses extrêmement compatibles, aussi bien dans le grand monde que parmi le peuple.* Further, see the detailed description of the immoral but pious age in connection with Arnaud, *o.d.*, II, 101*b* ff., 102*a*: *Il paraît par toute la suite de son discours, que les mêmes personnes qui sont coupables des désordres qu'il a décrits, sont celles qui se confessent et qui communient très-souvent, et il n'est pas le seul qui reconnaisse cette verité.*

reason, will dominate human circumstances. That superstition and fanaticism should ever disappear, or ever even materially diminish, he holds to be quite out of the question; all attempts at religious reform serve, as a rule, only further to increase the zeal and passion; "study the history of the Church and you will see that in every period the religious rebellions which have not been victorious have only served to redouble the abuses. Attacks upon ancient religious errors are apt to cause them to take a yet deeper root" (*Dict.*, 2082*a*, article "Nestorius"). The thought, too, of a growing religious enlightenment affords no help. For those who make the reason the principle of faith, in view of the predominantly destructive character of our reason, will unavoidably be led further and further into doubt and negation (see for example, *Dict.*, article "Pauliciens"). At any rate we may never hope to win over the mass of the people to the Enlightenment. For the mass seek in religion something other than intellectual clarity; to them, indeed, the incomprehensibility of certain things is rather agreeable than otherwise. Bayle has discussed this point in detail more particularly in the article "Socinius" in the Dictionary. "The speculative mysteries of the religions," he writes, "do not incommodate the people; but they cause real trouble to a professor of theology, who ponders over them with all his might in order to explain them and to meet the objections of heretics. Further, others of learned education who, in their thirst for knowledge, are led to test these statements, may also be disturbed by the contradictions of their reason. The rest of humanity, on the other hand, does not excite itself in the very least with regard to the matter. The majority of men believe—or they believe that they believe—all that they are told in this connection, and they are quite comfortable in this conviction. One would have therefore to be something like an unpractical enthusiast [*Schwärmer—visionaire* (Bayle)] in order to believe that citizens and peasants, soldiers and nobles would be freed from an oppressive yoke if only they were absolved from their adhesion to the dogmas of the Trinity and of consubstantiality. They greatly prefer to subordinate them-

selves to a mysterious, incomprehensible doctrine, placed above reason. Men reverence the more that which they do not understand, and make of it a more elevated and comforting idea. All the final purposes (*fins*) of religion are better found in objects we do not comprehend; these fill us with more admiration, more respect, more fear, more confidence" (see 2609*b*).

Such a cheerless view of the intellectual and moral condition of man, together with the absence of any belief in progress, must give rise to great pessimism. We are, in this case, not far from complete despair and the abandonment of all ideals. Nevertheless, Bayle does not fall into this danger. Not only does he retain his faith in the inner light of the conscience, but he holds fast, too, to the conviction that there are found here and there amongst men true piety and virtue, moral purity and genuine love towards God, a "belief that operates through love," "a quality of the heart that causes us to find more joy in the practice of virtue than in that of vice." But this is not the product of the general circumstances, appearing, on the contrary, as a miracle of God and of His Holy Spirit, directly communicating real truth and love to man. Thus we do not fall wholly into darkness; but the light that penetrates it here and there is suited rather to let us realise its obscurity than to dispel the same. The fact remains that man's nature contains a great contradiction: truth and virtue are demanded from us and this demand comes to expression in the laws of thought and of the conscience, but it is not able thoroughly to prevail and to give rise to a corresponding reality: knowledge becomes involved in insoluble contradictions, and our moral faculties, while remaining free from these, are not able to overcome the elementary power of the natural instincts and passions. Thus a higher world enters into our existence, but does not become our full possession. We are conscious of the shortcomings of our position but cannot rise above them. All our spiritual efforts finally do no more than permit us to realise the gulf between ourselves and the goals which we nevertheless cannot abandon. The one indestructible and certain thing upon which we can rely in the midst of all the

confusion and upheaval, is the conscientiousness of our work and aspiration; and how lonely this appears in a strange and hostile world! Bayle's peculiar character played a great part in determining this predominantly negative conclusion. The result could not have been otherwise, when a man of far-seeing vision and great sensibility, but without active energy, without any sort of impulse to take up the struggle against the hostile forces, a man whose disposition it was to shun all unrest* and to seek, above all things, the quiet peace of work, was placed in an age full of such great complications, contrasts and struggles.

The problems that occupied and oppressed Bayle were felt and experienced in their fullest depth by Kant, too. He also adequately realised the limits of our knowledge and the contradictions indwelling in our reason itself; he, too, gave clear prominence to the moral division in man's nature; he, too, was far removed from any enthusiastic visions of progress. But he was not only the son of another age; he was able to oppose the contrasts and contradictions of life with a firmer and more energetic nature. Therefore he did not leave the spiritual forces which operate in our existence in the scattered and isolated condition in which the first impression presents them, but consolidated them in the form of a scientific experience and a moral world. Since, in this way, he advances from the mere subject to a spiritual organisation of humanity, the spiritual forces become equal to the resistances, a complete reversal of position reveals a new aspect of the world, and in the midst of all its limitations, life acquires a meaning and a value. At the same time the critique, which in Bayle's case was always in danger of becoming scepticism, separates itself very clearly from the latter and takes on a positive character. So the two thinkers remain widely different. And yet there is a certain connection between them, consisting more especially in the general character of the work, which pivots, in the main, about the relationship of the subject to the environment, and even constitutes something like a task of self-preservation on the part

* He is thoroughly in sympathy with the saying of Erasmus: *non amo veritatem seditiosam.*

of the subject against the external world. It is revealed, too, with full clearness at many separate points. For example, in the demonstration of the contradictory character of reason, which in the conflict of opinions invariably gives the advantage to the attacking side; in the transference of the centre of gravity of life to the moral sphere; in the conception of morality as a right attitude; in the quest of the universal as a certain canon; in the valuation of conscience and conscientiousness; in the form given to the relationship between morality and religion; and in the severity of the judgment passed upon man's moral position. In addition there is a relationship in the type of scientific work. In both cases the matter is made difficult rather than easy; the problems are not softened down but sharpened; the contradictions are not concealed or slurred over but given the greatest prominence, and there is throughout a most determined effort to bring the concrete situation to full recognition. Both men would prefer to be incomplete rather than premature. Both, moreover, think along the line of *either —or*, rather than of *both—and*. Nevertheless the difference remains; and in any comparison Bayle must needs take second place. He is, however, more than a mere precursor; for he possessed a specific nature of his own, to the study of which we can always return with pleasure. In the whole of our more modern literature there is hardly a writer who commands such an immeasurable knowledge, yet avoids the danger of sinking into pedantry, who is at the same time so spiritual and so scholarly, who reflects impressions with such freshness and faithfulness, who gives such a free expression to the problems of human existence, and who is able to make his ideas so obvious and so impressive. Bayle, therefore, maintains an independent position; and from him a light can fall upon other thinkers.

PHILOSOPHICAL PARTIES

XVIII

PHILOSOPHICAL PARTIES*

Ἥασιν ἡμῖν τοῦτο σύνηθες, μὴ πρὸς τὸ πρᾶγμα ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ζήτησιν ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸν τἀναντία λέγοντα.

The history of philosophy exhibits not only schools dependent upon particular distinguished personalities, not only sects ramifying out and separating themselves from the general movement of the whole, not merely different tendencies and types of thought, peacefully existing side by side, but also divisions of such a character that they can hardly be described otherwise than as *parties*. For we must speak of parties and of a party conflict when a split is formed which goes beyond any personal relationship, sides coming into being, each of which claims the whole for itself. Each of these sides comprehends its specific character in a thesis, this forming a point of concentration; and at this point it enters upon a severe struggle for existence, a struggle which is able to drag the whole sphere of knowledge into its vortex. An essential characteristic, too, is that each side gains a larger or smaller circle of sympathisers, thus constituting a centre where many persons unite for collective influence and for the purpose of conflict. A division of this kind, within philosophy, embraces departments which may be large or small. We shall be primarily occupied, in the present instance, with those cases in which the division and the conflict extends itself, in an ideal sense, over the whole field. We shall direct our attention not

* First published in the *Philosophische Monatshefte*, vol. xx: 1884. The article has since, however, been revised in important particulars.

to logical, ethical, or metaphysical schisms in particular, but to general philosophical parties.

Does the history of philosophy present the spectacle of a continuous conflict? It would appear not. Only at particular periods does the struggle break out in full force. In between there are periods when different bodies of thought and feeling exist tolerantly side by side, or even when all opposition seems extinguished. Nevertheless, the formation of parties and their conflict, the fact of party divisions, remains a phenomenon of thoroughgoing importance. The more full the life which pulses through philosophy, the more energetic is the division of men's minds; the more rapidly knowledge progresses, the more movement and change of parties it usually brings with it; on the other hand, it demonstrates an undesirable state of things, when there is no concentration of isolated forces in the defence of common convictions, or when divisions which have lost their vitality continue to drag out a meaningless existence. The struggle at the summit, at the critical points, is decisive, in its consequences, for the whole. Even if the conflict ends, the antithesis remains. The difference, once recognised, can never again fully disappear from our consciousness. There is no peace, but only a truce, unless—which is exceptional—the problem itself dies out. It thus remains correct that the effect of the struggle and the party division extends virtually to the whole, that the party division is something which must be taken into account in the general movement of philosophy.

We see, however, that party division and party conflict occur under all kinds of different circumstances. When a new movement works its way upwards, it must attack the old which already holds the field. And the mere fact of war breaking out between them is in itself sufficient to drag down the older body of thought from its position of security, to narrow it to a party thing, to force it into a defensive position; it now sinks to be a mere sect, an antiquated standpoint, just as, in the sphere of religion, the new belief displaces the old, reducing it to the level of a superstition. But the victorious new movement itself cannot long escape division. Soon old

antitheses spring up on the new soil, albeit in changed form, and again there is a cleavage of opinion: for example after the gigantic upheaval brought about by Kant, Spinoza and Leibniz were resuscitated in the persons of Hegel and Herbart. Or possibly the new position undergoes a schism, which so splits up the work and so embitters those who are carrying on the struggle, that the common basis is thereby completely forgotten. This took place at the beginning of the modern philosophical period, after the Cartesian revolution. The movement of knowledge and life is continually producing fresh formations; and it would thus seem as if these must cut across one another and the general situation become more and more complicated. But opposed to this progressive complexity, is the impulse to let fall that which has become useless or unimportant, to subordinate all separate oppositions to one comprehensive antithesis, not to weaken the contrast, but to carry through a single *either—or*. Thus we see at the beginning of the new age, and also in the case of Kant, the disappearance of all previous party division with its ramifications, before the ascending problems. There is thus an opposition in the movement; an impulse towards further ramification and an impulse towards simplification work against one another, and continually create fresh situations and tasks.

The movement enhances an antithesis which springs from the relationship of the person to the party. Those who are engaged in the work cannot very well admit that right is divided among the parties without weakening the firmness of their conviction and the intensity of their energy. There can be only one truth; therefore he who defends a certain conviction must defend it as being exclusive. He can no more permit it to be divided than the true mother who appeared before Solomon could allow her child to be cut asunder. If he were contented, accordingly, to consider his side as a mere party he would be giving up the whole; he must therefore desire it to be more than a party. Furthermore, he cannot allow the other side to reckon as a party, since this would be admitting a certain right on its part and a limit on his own. What is too little for him is too much for another. It

follows that the party is not a basis upon which one could ever wish to abide. In reality the conflicting parties are engaged throughout in endeavouring to raise themselves above the party position, while thrusting their opponents below it, and seeking to represent them as sectarians divorced from all universally valid convictions. And just this easily comprehensible, nay unavoidable, endeavour of each party to be more than a party, leads to ever fresh formations, and at the same time to new party divisions. This takes place, more especially, in two different ways. The one investigator strives to rise above the opposition by introducing a new element, presumed to be superior to it, and elevated above party conflict. But hardly is this developed, and to some extent consolidated, before it itself is looked upon by the others as a party, or gives rise to party constructions. What was meant as universal, is not able, as the movement progresses, to escape particularity. Another, on the other hand, will not admit any antithesis at all; the right, he declares, lies wholly on the one side. And now it becomes his duty to stop the conflict at its root, to prove that the opposite side is absolutely devoid of foundation. This, however, will be possible only if he deepens his own position, and (even if secretly) reconstructs it. Thus the situation continually alters, although those who are participating are not necessarily conscious of this. Hardly anything stimulates the conflict so much as that which was intended to extinguish it. A sort of party mechanism is the result of the combined operation of motive forces due to personal considerations, and those arising from what is inherent in the matter itself. From this particular standpoint it is possible to obtain a characteristic view of the history of philosophy as a whole.

The phenomenon of party division in general necessarily becomes a problem when considered in broad and systematic fashion. There is only one truth, and it belongs to humanity as a whole. Is it not a contradiction of its being when we treat it as a party matter; and must not such a treatment injure the work and imperil its success? The phenomenon is one which undoubtedly demands explanation. It is to be expected, moreover, that the discussion of the matter will throw a peculiar light upon the

entire task of knowledge and provoke thoughts of general interest.

The explanation of the phenomenon offered by scepticism is, in appearance, the simplest. Unfortunately, however, this explanation, at bottom, explains absolutely nothing. The continual reconstruction of parties, their restless ascent and descent, the contrast between the claim of the individual to be complete and his actual limitation—all this appears to the sceptic to prove that philosophy is no more than a juxtaposition of individual opinions, all equally right and equally wrong, and that its history is a mere to-and-fro movement of such opinions. But the phenomenon of party division itself contradicts this conception. In the formation of a party there takes place a union of many individuals, a combination of separate forces in a common task; and this is achieved from within and not through outward pressure. How could completely isolated forces effect an inward combination? How is a summation of elements, an even partially permanent concentration upon a given point, possible, if there be no common basis, no capacity for mutual understanding? The conflict could not give rise to so much excitement, so much movement, nay, as a spiritual conflict, it could not come into being at all, if the misunderstanding were complete, if the different circles merely existed side by side, wholly cut off from one another. Why are we not able to permit other convictions to reckon as of equal value with our own, somewhat as in the case of sensuous impressions? Whence comes the impulse common to all parties towards a truth superior to the party position? Everything points to a more deep-lying complication than scepticism is able to explain. There are reasons compelling us to regard the party as more than an accidental aggregation of subjective opinions. But the question of its real nature and significance remains open, and urges us to another explanation.

In the realm of philosophy, as in other departments of life, two factors go to the formation of a party: there must be inherent in the matter itself antitheses, or at any rate different sides, stages or possibilities—without such an inherent basis the party has no hold and sinks to be a mere faction or côterie;

and, further, in the special historical position of the period, a particular antithesis must make itself felt above all the others and must enter into the life of the period, dividing men and at the same time drawing them together. Thus whatever formations may be derived from the historical movement will point back to problems inherent in the matter itself.

It is thus easy to perceive in what different ways the task of philosophy can be taken up and directed. In distinction from the ramification of the separate sciences, philosophy strives towards a completeness of knowledge, a view of reality as a whole. But even this first step at once gives rise to complication and division. Has philosophy simply to take up the position communicated to it by the other sciences, or has it to develop this position further, according to the laws and demands which philosophy contains within itself? Is its attitude to be reflective only, or is it also to be productive? Is the desired union a mere selection of the common features, a piecing together of the given material, hardly worthy to be described as a synthesis, or can philosophy in truth bring the things nearer to one another, perhaps precisely in this very way more clearly exhibiting their distinctions? Does its work carry its standard within itself, or must it seek it without? We know what great conflict has raged around this problem, a conflict which has continued down to the present day. On the one hand, the more comprehensive claim is rejected on the score of overboldness and exaggeration, and is regarded as a falling away from scientific work; on the other, the limitation of philosophy is scorned as an abandonment of its independence. The conflict reaches its greatest intensity around the question of the possibility and necessity of metaphysics; for millenniums the metaphysicians and the anti-metaphysicians have stood at daggers drawn. From the earliest times, it has been peculiar to metaphysics to assert that the demands of thought lead to an irreconcilable conflict with the immediate view of reality, and that, in the case of such conflict, thought has the right and the duty to alter this view according to its claims, cleansing it from its contradictions, and causing the inner necessities of thought to prevail against every resistance.

The metaphysical path has not always been pursued with the same energy; and thus the degrees of transformation due to philosophical influence have been different. It is obvious, however, that the work of philosophy has exercised, in various directions, an immense influence upon the world of thought, not, however, without itself undergoing a division to the point of complete opposition. Let us examine these directions and their associated conflicts a little more in detail.

That philosophy overlooks the whole of the human task of knowledge does not signify that it must subordinate multiplicity to a unity, or even cause the former entirely to disappear. For it might well be that this comprehensive review, this consideration of the position of things as a whole, would rather have the effect of bringing out with increased clearness the differences between particular things and between the various departments of life, thus separating them from one another more sharply. We find, accordingly, that there are two different types of thought. The one seeks to view the things together as a whole, treating the differences as secondary and letting them drop as far as possible into the background; it understands and values the separate things according to their places in the whole. In following this path there is a danger of slurring over the specific character of the individual thing, pushing forward too quickly to a smooth conclusion, and producing an artificial simplification, easily accompanied by superficiality. This gives the opposed mode of thought a right to lay the greatest possible stress upon the individuality of particular things, to pay attention to contradictions, and rather to leave the problems unsolved than settle them with too great facility. In this case the concrete content of reality and with it the specific character of human knowledge come far more to recognition; but at the same time there arises the danger of an abandonment of the solidarity of reality and of a premature suspension of the conflict against the irrational element in the human situation. So the struggle sways now in this direction, now in that, and continually produces new formations. It is obvious that there is here an opposition not merely of opinions, but of types of thought, which no mere logical argument can bring together.

According, in each case, to the difference in general tendency there result opposed ideals for the whole of life and conduct. On the one hand, the main demand appears to be for subordination to the whole, for an emphasis upon what is in common, and for the expulsion of all that is specific and distinctive, as if it were no more than an obstacle (*omnis determinatio negatio*); on the other, it is precisely the distinctive which appears important and valuable, and what is uniform presents itself as something lower, as a mere beginning beyond which the movement must progress. When the opposition is so sharp, the parties to which it gives rise can be at one only in the rejection of a mediatory compromise. An overcoming of the opposition would demand a new standpoint, and in the midst of the party strife this appears unattainable.

Philosophy divides the world of thought and sunders life itself, in another direction, in the case of the problem of rest and movement, of time and eternity. The customary view of things provides a mixture of the two which appears unbearably confused when subjected to more energetic methods of thought, and philosophy thus insists upon a separation, thereby itself developing in directly opposite directions. On the one hand, all movement and change appear to be tainted with an inner contradiction, and to be a mere appearance, so that our view of reality should be radically purified of this element; on the other, a resting, stationary being is regarded as an impossibility, and everything of this nature which has found its way into our view of reality seems to be no more than an appearance which it is the task of our thought energetically to remove in order to bring the whole into flux, and to understand all being from the standpoint of becoming. The resultant division of opinion gives rise to fundamentally different ideals of life: in the first instance we have an effort to achieve, as far as possible, a condition of permanence, to find true happiness in a rest superior to the world, in the contemplation and treatment of things *sub specie æterni*; in the second, we have a wholehearted submergence in the stream of time, a realisation of the highest satisfaction in a restless effort to move further and further. In opposition to this division all kinds of attempts

are made to overcome the antithesis, and to bring rest and movement, time and eternity into a relationship of mutual completion; but in so far as these attempts go beyond weak compromise, they are apt to produce new schisms and new party formations. Those who take the problem earnestly seem never to come to a resting-point.

Although the previous oppositions penetrate very deeply into the structure of life, we may describe them as being predominantly formal. Still greater becomes the tension when we come to concern ourselves with the problem of content, when we ask the question: Which department of reality has to provide the dominating position for the view of the world as a whole? The main consideration here is that for us civilised people the world seems to be given in twofold fashion: from without and from within, as a physical and as a psychical phenomenon. Once we have become clearly conscious of this antithesis, it seems impossible to allow the juxtaposition quietly to remain; now the one must subordinate itself to the other, and the only question is which is primary and which secondary, which original and which derived. Thus, on the one hand we have an attempt to place everything psychical—including all spiritual and intellectual work—under the sway of natural concepts, while refusing to recognise anything as true reality which cannot show itself to be natural, in the broad sense of the word. This tendency carries with it a thoroughly characteristic construction of life and civilisation; it involves an expulsion of all independent and self-valuable psychic life, a binding down of the whole of life to the environment, and consequently an elevation of sensuous goods to be the main objects of all effort.

On the other hand, we perceive an endeavour to convert the outer world into a mere appearance of the inner life, while building up the latter to be an independent and self-sufficient world, to whose purposes everything is to be subordinated. This is accompanied by the danger of a slurring over of the characteristic features of the outer world, as well as of an emptiness on the part of the inner life, detached as it is from all that is external.

In opposition to an antithesis which reaches down so deeply into the basic structure of life, there arises an aspiration towards reconciliation and an overcoming of the contrast, and we note the development of a "monistic" mode of thought. But along with this there goes a new assertion, which (in as far as when carried out in detail it does not relapse into the antithesis), brings with it a new union, and at the same time a new division of opinion. Further, this "monistic" development gives rise to unlimited differences of opinion as to the more exact comprehension of nature and of the inner life; in the case of nature, for example, it is a question whether the mathematical-physical or the organical-biological side should dominate our concepts; and, in the case of the inner life, it is a matter of dispute what content should be given to the spiritual life. There result possibilities upon possibilities, and these invite to the formation of parties, provided that the historical situation impels to an appropriation of one or other of them, and a conversion of it into living conviction.

The varied life which results from the development and conflict of these possibilities, is able wholly to absorb men's minds as long as the struggle surges to and fro and each party hopes to obtain a final victory. But ultimately there will come a time of relaxation and self-recollection, and then we shall inevitably find ourselves confronted with the question whether the whole yields any sort of secure result, whether all the inexpressible trouble and labour does not lead but deeper into confusion. Then scepticism raises its head; for its principal argument has always been that reason, in its struggle for truth, unavoidably becomes wrapped in contradictions, and that it gives rise to incompatible statements which are equally right and equally wrong, and each of which, although able successfully to attack the opposed doctrine, is impotent to secure its own position.* And those who avoid falling into scepticism

* Thus, to the older scepticism, the ἰσοσθένεια τῶν λόγων (the equilibrium of "for" and "against") was a main weapon; a further application of this thought we came across in the case of Bayle; we see it, in its grandest development, in Kant. According to the latter's conviction the inevitable shipwreck of all attempts to obtain an insight into the supersensuous becomes most obvious when we consider that "there are principles

cannot simply close their ears to its argument and avoid the difficulties involved in the metaphysics which it attacks. The latter undertook, at any rate in its older form, to draw inferences from thought and apply them to the neighbouring world; being must correspond, it was believed, to that which was demanded by the necessities of thought. But such a passage from thought to being presupposes an inner relationship between the two, the existence of a common world embracing the two; for in this way alone can that which applies to one side be valid also upon the other.

But how is this supposition to be grounded, and how can we trust this necessity of thought, when it leads in such opposed directions and divides us so seriously amongst ourselves? For every man believes himself to follow the necessity of thought, when he follows his own path.

The consideration and experience of such doubt must shake the old-fashioned metaphysic in the severest possible way; and those who do not give themselves up to negation, must necessarily seek a new concept of truth and must develop the task of philosophy in an essentially new direction. And here there seems to be only one possible path: there must be a movement from the objective to the subjective: even if the world of things is inaccessible to our thought, yet the latter retains its own active influence and governing power, and in place of knowledge of the world there will be the self-knowledge of the thinking and knowing spirit. We know with what power Kant effected this revolution, and how he believed his work to have secured, if not an inert peace, at any rate a safe and right position for all ages, while at the same time putting a definite end to all party division. But it soon appeared that the subject, which was to provide this firm basis, is not so simple and secure; and that as much division and strife could arise as to its proper comprehension as with regard to the attainment of the object. For a world, even if it is only a world of phenomena, cannot be supported by the subject (which thus gains an object of knowledge) unless

in our reason, which, in opposition to every statement explaining these matters, sets up a contradictory statement, apparently just as well founded; and reason herself destroys her own attempts" (*Hart. viii. 523*).

the latter is something more than an isolated and changeable point, unless it contains a permanent and common spiritual organisation; violent conflict can, nay must, soon arise upon this point. Such an organisation, claiming, as it does, law-giving power, goes beyond immediate experience and from the experiential standpoint may be objected to as being metaphysical; those who retain it will, however, easily be driven beyond the Kantian position and be compelled to undertake the development of an independent spiritual world. And here we have fresh complications; in this case human capacity may easily seem overstrained, and the content of the spiritual life appear one-sidedly conceived.

These complications are clearly perceptible in the case of Hegel; whatever may be our opinion of his achievement, no one can assert that his philosophy settled the problem of truth. The strife of parties was not brought to an end by Kant; but has raged since his time more furiously than ever; the movement towards the subject, so far from composing the discord, merely transferred it to another place, a place where uncertainty and division are still less endurable. All the same, a change was effected that cannot be undone; philosophy no longer finds itself confronted with a given and indisputable task, but has itself to shape this task. In this way the struggle takes hold far more deeply of the fundamental concept of life and of our fundamental relationship to reality. In particular it is obvious that a definite relationship between subject and object, between man and world, cannot be presupposed as secure, but is first to be discovered and to be defined clearly. This cannot be accomplished, however, except by beginning with that which it is possible directly to experience; it is thus our task to lay hold of life, and as far as possible to grasp it as a whole, in order from this standpoint to explain the meaning of knowledge and obtain a picture of reality. But the hardest conflict of all breaks out with regard to the question of what shall be reckoned the nearest and the most certain.

Now we reach the point at which there is the sharpest and the most irreconcilable cleavage of opinion.

Some look upon the sensations with their relationships as

being the immediate and therefore the only real things. This conviction cannot be strictly carried through without the division between an inner and an outer world appearing a superfluity, nay, a disastrous error. Thus all metaphysic vanishes, and with it all possibility in general of any penetration behind the surface and the stream of sensations. There could hardly be any question of a content in life, and of a life of our own, if this type of thought were not imperceptibly complemented by elements borrowed from other relationships. Philosophy in this case would become a mere science of sensations.

Others, however, are driven beyond this position through the consideration that there are no such things as free, isolated sensations but only *my* sensations and *your* sensations, that the ego cannot result from the sensations but is presupposed by them. It is the ego, which, in the life-process, and not merely in the opinion of philosophers, raises itself up from the separate events and is able to offer opposition to them. Life thus acquiring a centre, that which previously seemed to be the whole now becomes peripheral, and the separation of an inward and an outward within life itself becomes unavoidable. At the same time man and the world fall further apart, and there arises a conflict between the two. This results in a characteristic conception of the task of knowledge, and in a characteristic view of reality.

But at the same time complications make themselves felt, and impel us beyond this position. Psychic life confined to particular points could never under any circumstances impart a content to life, or lead to scientific knowledge. The point from which a world has separated itself, would never be able to draw this world back to itself and inwardly to master it. Thus the question crops up, whether life by itself is not able to construct relationships which take on a cosmic character; there arises the question whether a spiritual life does not separate itself from the psychic life, a spiritual life superior to the antithesis of subject and object and able to produce from itself an autonomous reality. The individual man rather gains a part in this life than originates it through his own capacity; his life becomes a striving upward beyond the first position of things; it must transfer its centre of gravity and seek real

immediacy and its own firm basis beyond the nearest psychic processes. And this carries with it an assertion pregnant with consequences, compelling a division of opinion; a spiritual life thus growing independent is reckoned by some as the indispensable presupposition of all science and human culture, as well as of all spiritual individuality and personality, while to others this appears as an arbitrary and almost inconceivable hypothesis, a reckless and senseless plunge into the unknown. The antithesis, however, which is here in question reaches far beyond the conscious foundation, and reveals itself in the most varied forms throughout the whole history of philosophy. On the one side, spiritual goods and contents take the first place, seeming to exist independently of man and to communicate themselves to him, to measure him, to raise him to themselves; on the other, they seem to develop from a human basis and not to be able to give up the connection with the human mode of presentment and human interests; in the first case, thought asserts its independence of man's ideas, and the good separates itself from the agreeable and useful; in the second, the former (*i.e.*, thought and the good) must appear to be produced through the mere further development of the latter (*i.e.*, man's ideas and the agreeable and useful). Thus there arise obviously and fundamentally different types of life and knowledge. Is work carried on upon a merely human basis, or does it depend upon spiritual contents and necessities? The answer to this question divides human conviction more than almost anything else.

Further complications and divisions arise from the different ways in which the relationship of the spiritual life to reality may be understood. The conception of its own core is very closely connected with this problem. The spiritual life will bring a self-dependence on the part of reality (*Beisichselbstsein der Wirklichkeit*); but in our human sphere, however, such a self-dependence must first work its way up in the face of conditions of another kind, and it cannot be thought of without an antithesis. Then the question crops up: What is its attitude towards this other element; is it securely superior to the latter and is it able wholly to subject it, nay, to

convert it into itself, or does it encounter a hard resistance, in conflict with this being driven (inwardly, too) beyond the original position? The one side believes itself able to rate the resistance so low that it can be completely overcome, if not at once, bit by bit; it does not regard the disturbance as penetrating to the interior of the spiritual life, and the latter is looked upon as needing only to put forth its entire power, in order to master every resistance. So we obtain an optimistic idealism, under whose influence the task of knowledge must assume a characteristic shape. For if the spiritual life, with its human form, occupies a position of such secure superiority, and if it may regard itself as the core of all reality, it will be able, of itself, to open up knowledge, and possesses the power to penetrate with certainty to the last depths of truth. In this case, speculation, with its inner movement of thought, will maintain a superiority over against all experience.

The situation takes on a totally different aspect if the resistance be conceived as rigid and unconquerable, if the complication affects the very centre of the spiritual life, if an unbridgeable gulf opens up between our human capacity and the tasks which it is impossible for us to avoid. This is the position which gives rise to pessimism, and at the same time to a higher type of scepticism. There is not in this case any denial of a rational task; the laws of thought are recognised as effective, and the concepts of the true and the good are not rejected. But they do not acquire, in the human sphere, a power adequate to secure their prevalence; all the effort they cost us only exhibits the distance which removes them from us and makes us aware of our incapacity; thought will, in this case, dwell more especially upon the contradictions. If, at the same time, the demand cannot be evaded and if it unceasingly confronts man with the entire inadequacy of his accomplishment, nay, with the futility of all his efforts, the contradiction must paralyse the vital nerve of his life and creative work; and the struggle for truth, too, must finally realise its complete hopelessness and collapse. For in the long run this struggle cannot be kept up by continually reminding ourselves of contradictions and thus destroying false imaginings.

Again we find ourselves at a point where opinion divides. The paralysing influence of pessimism leads some to complete negation; while others find the complications which pessimism points out, to be impulses towards the discovery of new paths, thus making them means and instruments for the deepening of life. For the latter purpose, merely subjective wishing and willing are inadequate; to this end an inner development of spiritual life will be necessary, a penetration to a core inaccessible to the complications. There must be an advance from a universal to a characteristic spirituality. This is the path along which the religions move: but the problem reaches beyond the religions into life as a whole. Throughout it is a question of an inner gradation of life, and of an attempt to carry out, in a sphere of concentrated spirituality and personal conviction, that which could not be accomplished for life as a whole. But such an inner gradation of life would transform its whole appearance; it would work towards the preservation of the task as a whole in the midst of all complications and contradictions. Again, therefore, we have a characteristic type of life and thought, a concrete idealism, which pushes forward through the negation to an affirmation and keeps the yea and the nay in mind at the same time. In this case the task of knowledge must ultimately gain a positive conclusion, after passing through energetic criticism and manifold resignation.

Thus we have a wealth of types of life and thought, all witnessing that the conflict of parties is not a result of freely ranging reflection, impelling some in one direction, and some in another, but rather arises from the fact that the core of life is being sought in different places and the work of thought is accordingly shaping itself in fundamentally different fashions. It is obvious that we are not struggling so much for the interpretation of a common given reality, as for the shaping of reality itself, and in this work the very greatest importance must attach to that which man makes of his own life and to his manner of understanding it. Whether, in its particular manifestations, the development of life goes essentially beyond the customary aim of natural and social self-

preservation, and at the same time the inner life wins an independence; whether man finds great tasks in this inner life, and in working at them becomes superior to his entire environment; and whether, finally, difficult complications become noticeable and force us to an inner transformation—all these points are of far greater importance for the formation of the thought-world than anything which may present itself from without. For it is this inner which first communicates to the outer its meaning and value; the same facts can be interpreted in fundamentally different ways, according to whether they are included in this or that relationship, referred to this or that life-centre. As it is with individuals, so it is with peoples and ages; the decisive point in the conflict lies considerably deeper down than the point at which we are accustomed to look for it. The concepts and doctrines are only the appearance of spiritual energies, and if this were not so the passionate conflict they arouse would be inexplicable.

When the problem is thus taken a stage deeper, the formation and development of philosophical parties acquires an enhanced interest. The antitheses themselves, as we find them inherent in our nature and attitude towards the world, are very far from being the source of such division; for this purpose the problem must become prominent and must be appropriated; this will take place, however, under particular historical circumstances, and is therefore to be understood only from the standpoint of history. The nature of the work, the working out of new groups of facts, fortunate advance of work in a particular direction, the inner condition of humanity, the predominance of a feeling of strength or of weakness, the emergence of dominating personalities who induce humanity to follow their paths—all these factors operate together. If the analysis be sufficiently penetrating, it is possible to obtain, from the standpoint of philosophical party division, a sort of history of the work of thought.

The matter must, it is true, be treated with great caution for the position of the parties is by no means a pure expression of the spiritual situation. Movements may exist and exert influence in a particular age, and yet not come to a tangible concentration so as to give rise to parties; moreover, party formations

made in earlier and inwardly remote ages, may preserve themselves through the dead weight of their existence, and unite and divide men at a point which is no longer the vital centre of the antithesis. To-day, in particular, in philosophy, as well as in politics and religion, we have often to do with party divisions which are inwardly obsolete, and on this account, the real antitheses do not get a chance of adequate unfoldment. As compared with the disintegration into numbers of little circles and factions, there is a lack of great dividing lines of conflict. It is characteristic of the real antitheses of the present day that they penetrate far more deeply down into the basic content of life and are therewith concerned much more with principles than has been the case in most other ages. Formerly men differed as to the paths by which the goal might be reached; but to-day the goals themselves have become uncertain. In former times, for example, men disputed as to the derivation of morality; while, to-day, morality itself has become insecure.* It is only to be wished that the true state of things should attain to full and clear expression in the formation of the parties.

In reviewing the history of conflicts and parties in philosophy we may feel inclined to ask the question whether, taking the matter as a whole, we have made any progress, whether the movement of thousands of years has carried us beyond certain standpoints and antitheses. A negative answer would seem, in this case, to spring to our lips far more readily than an affirmative, a certain affirmation being rescued, indeed, only with difficulty. For the historical progress of the movement beyond a particular position is not an actual refutation of the latter; the rationality of history is itself a question; the further development may well be looked upon as a mere complication, and the striking out of new ways as an abandonment of the true path. Thus we see, in actual fact, that positions which have seemed obsolete for cen-

* Sorley justly observes (*Recent Tendencies in Ethics* (1904), p. 12 ff.): "We have no longer the same common basis of agreement to rely upon that our predecessors had a generation ago. There are many indications in recent literature that the suggestion is now made more readily than it was twenty or thirty years ago that the scale of moral values may have to be revised. . . . Modern controversy would not hesitate to call in question the received code of morality, and to revise our standard of right and wrong."

turies, nay for thousands of years, are taken up anew again and again; Aristotelianism, which even in Grecian days seemed left far behind, developed new power in the Middle Ages, and through the reawakening of Thomism exercises important influence even down to the present day; nay, the most recent movements in natural science again adopt the hylozoism of the Ionian scientists with such an absence of prejudice that the intervening thousands of years seem to have passed by without a trace. It is true that when the old is thus brought forth into new life, the mode of its defence is different, it is more complicated and is richer in reflection; although this applies more to the representation than to the core of the thing itself. Those alone have the right to speak of an inner advance who are able to separate from all merely human standpoints and opinions, a world-historical evolution of the spiritual life, and to distinguish from the superficies of the age the particular stage of this evolution which is operative in it. This world-historical evolution exhibits itself in the sphere of philosophy far more powerfully in bringing out new problems than in giving conclusive answers, but these problems themselves contain facts, even if they are facts situated deeper down, and the emergence of the problem makes much which until then was considered adequate, obsolete for the world-historical movement. Such obsolete positions are hylozoism and Aristotelianism, no matter how many followers they may command even at the present day. But the recognition of this world-historical movement itself rests upon preliminary assumptions which are by no means matters-of-course. Thus in this direction, too, we do not free ourselves of conflict and in the whole we must convince ourselves that history does not bring to us a ready-made truth but is able only to shape the struggle for truth so that it is greater, more intense, freer from accidents.

THE REFLECTION OF THE AGE IN ITS CONCEPTS

XIX

THE REFLECTION OF THE AGE IN ITS CONCEPTS*

The modern man feels the great antithesis of fate and freedom in the first place in the relationship to his own age. To him, the age is his fate. It surrounds him with a superior power from the beginning of his development; with silent compulsion it shapes him to that which in its result seems to be the product of his own work and free decision; it holds him within its circle even when his consciousness detaches itself from this circle and passionately turns against it. For, ultimately, this struggle, too, lies within the age; it has grown out of its needs and is carried on with its means. Thus we cannot escape from our age; from it spring all our aspirations, and to it all our endeavours return.

But at the same time the modern man's attitude towards the age is far too reflective and critical for him to become a mere fragment of it. He cannot possibly allow himself merely to be driven forward by that which comes into contact with him, without using his own will and thought; he cannot accept that which is offered him without judgment or choice. For him, the core of the age, nay the age itself, must first be sought. For as little as all the events that have ever occurred belong to history, just as little do all the varied phenomena around us belong to the age. How, then, can we find the age; in what manner does it stand out from the immeasurable wealth of separate

* *Edit. Note.*—This essay was originally written as an Introduction to the *Grundbegriffe der Gegenwart*, and is translated from the 2nd edition of that work (1893). It should be studied in conjunction with *Main Currents of Modern Thought* (which is based upon the *Grundbegriffe der Gegenwart*).

facts and events? Moreover, the age, with its content, proclaims itself not as one thing parallel with others, but as the whole, not as a mere fact, but as truth, as complete and ultimate truth. That which it brings is to advance everything and to please everybody. But upon what can such a claim be based unless we rise beyond the age and look at things from a standpoint transcending time? And this demands the development of an original life-process founded in itself. Having reached this point, however, we must recognise that all spiritual creation possesses a superiority as compared with the age and liberates man from its compulsion, nay, that it wages an unceasing struggle against all that belongs to the things of mere time.

Thus we cannot abandon freedom, and at the same time we cannot deny necessity. There results a double relationship between man and the age, the nature of which is at first obscure. Whatever may be the solution of this complication, we must all of us welcome anything that brings this twofold relationship to clearer expression, and at the same time introduces us to the actual position of the age and strengthens our independence with regard to it.

A specific method by which we may both penetrate within the age and pass beyond it, is offered by a study of the concepts; for in these the general thought and life of an age move. We say *general*; for we do not mean those concepts that the separate sciences create for their special purposes, but those that our common civilised life develops for the whole of our human action and condition.

These concepts are present in the first place to the individuals in numerous expressions which come to them as part of their environment and find ready acceptance. One would have to stand outside the movement of the age in order not daily to employ expressions like "evolution," "adaptation," "struggle for existence," "*milieu*," "society," "consciousness," "experience," "subjective—objective," and so forth. Nothing could seem more indifferent, more noncommittal than the use of such expressions. But terms of this sort are far from being mere words. They have a background; they are a precipitate of the work of thought; they mark the appear-

ance of concepts; and the content of the concept is operative in the word. Although in adopting a word, the individual usually receives an obscure general impression rather than a clear idea, in as far as his thought becomes plastic it finds paths of least resistance ready in the expressions and concepts; as a matter of course it travels along these, and yet this procedure really involves a recognition of purposes that are by no means a matter-of-course; imperceptibly it has taken a pledge committing it to the unforeseeable. For in reality the concepts that stand behind the expressions are not indifferent tools, not mere descriptions of existing facts. They provide specific conditions and place the things in specific illuminations. They cannot declare certain things to be primary without dragging others down into a secondary position. In this way they effect a gradation and grouping of our circle of thought. They indicate tasks and points of attack; they appear merely to ask and yet through the nature of the question, they at the same time give a reply. They lend to that to which they affix their stamp an incomparably greater power and facility of effect than it possessed in a disintegrated condition. In concepts such as "social question," "will to live," "struggle for existence," and so forth, do not old experiences, through their union, attain to altogether unanticipated power and insistence? In a word, the concepts contain assertions and theories, aims and guiding directions. In the case, for example, of a favourite expression of the day—*milieu*, one would have entirely to forget the concept involved in the word in order not to realise that it contains a specific and perhaps very disputable determination of the relationship between the social environment and the individual. Through the daily use of "standpoint" and "point of view" do we not, in effect, recognise an equal right on the part of each separate individuality? Could there be so much talk as there is to-day of "values" and "judgments of value" unless the actual content of the things themselves were rated below their influence upon the feeling and valuing subject?

The entire existence of the civilised man is however closely enmeshed in such concepts. When we try to understand ourselves, when we arrange our relationship to our fellowmen, and

when we ponder over cosmic and ultimate problems, the age, working through its concepts, provides us with a characteristic picture; in every case it draws us into its paths, by virtue of the imperceptible influence of the concepts; in every case work stands under the influence of hidden presuppositions and ready-made judgments. In an individual case this appears to be, and indeed is, unimportant; but in its whole result it affects the fundamental conditions of spiritual existence; for it means, in effect, that the age gives us a developed circle of thought, a ready-made scheme of the world and of life, and with silent pressure compels us to accept it. When we believe that we are thinking for ourselves, the age is in reality thinking in us, using us as the mere instruments of its aspiration. And the concepts are the tentacles with which it draws us within the circle of its power and compels us to do its behest. Social science has convincingly shown us that in a moral sense we are tied to the condition of the social environment; that the same obtains in an intellectual sense is shown not less clearly by the science of concepts.

If, however, it were a question of purely intellectual processes, it would be impossible under any circumstances to explain the overpowering and penetrating influence of the concepts of the age. In reality the age pours its love and its hatred into the concepts. Through them it speaks to us with mighty feeling. That which it affirms, it gives out as indisputable, incomparably valuable and absolutely reasonable; that which it denies as hardly thinkable, objectionable and foolish. It recommends or condemns; from the very beginning it treats as a settled affair, that which can be demonstrated only with difficulty, if at all; on the other hand that which it does not look upon as a matter of course it is apt to reject as absurd. With eagle eyes it takes note of even the smallest things pointing in the direction of its own aspiration; while it is blind with regard even to the most conspicuous things tending in an opposite direction. That which works in its own direction seems from the beginning to be of the highest importance; it is extolled in its advantages and pardoned in its errors; at the very least it is looked upon as "interesting" and occupies

men's thoughts. In the case of the other, however, attention is directed towards its faults only; everything is at once set down as quite unimportant and unworthy of consideration. Thus we have a highly unjust procedure, as summary as it is partial; there is the same double measure and double weight, to which we have become accustomed in the conflicts upon dogmatic belief. And in reality the reason is a similar one. For the age believes in itself, in itself only, and by reason of this belief it has no patience with that which opposes it. In these assertions as a whole the age affirms nothing other than its own creation and aspiration, the main trend of its own work, its characteristic spiritual substance. It is in reality a struggle for existence, and considering the nature of such a struggle we may fully understand all this passionate feeling, the whole matter-of-course character of the concepts, and the tyrannical pressure upon the individuals. We can never understand why to-day power is given precisely to these concepts while it is taken away from the others, without a recognition of the fact that behind the concepts stand the experiences and ideas which give this particular character to the work of the age.

While thus being taken up in larger relationships, the concepts nevertheless retain a characteristic significance. In them, the aspirations of the age penetrate into the more detailed content of reality, the leading ideas seek to master the objective world and transform it into full work; it is just at this point that the invisible struggle and creation, which is often not self-conscious, comes to visible expression and prescribes definite paths for all further construction. That which is gained, or on the other hand that which goes amiss, at this first point, can hardly ever again be altered. That the endeavour should be at once called to account at this early stage, where it first permits of being grasped, is all the more necessary, since it is precisely in forming the concepts that the endeavour of the age puts forward with peculiar emphasis its claim to full and exclusive truth. For the concept, with its direction towards the object, its attempt to fix an objective truth, can never under any circumstances allow itself and its content to be reduced to a shifting appearance or a subjective

opinion. That which it asserts shall be valid for all and for ever. Accordingly, in its development to a world of concepts, the claim of the life of the age reaches its highest point.

But this highest point becomes at the same time, a critical point. With it the drama reaches its dénouement. Precisely this insistence of the concepts upon a universally valid truth, this laying hold of the object, places the matter outside the opinion and pleasure of the age; it constitutes an appeal from the age to the truths of the things themselves, and in this way transforms the whole nature of the life-process, and with it man's position. His reason awakens and exhibits a super-temporal nature; it becomes clear that it may well be swept along for a while by the current of time, but cannot be absorbed in the latter; inner independence, which is its natural heritage, may indeed be neglected for a while, but will again be brought into action. Then, however, it becomes the judge of the age and is able to discriminate between true and false. When things develop in this fashion, man obtains a strong support in the face of all those forces which press in upon him; there arises a new type of life and work, more original, more his own; whole worlds clash together in him and a hot conflict breaks out. But the inner superiority to the age and with it the deepening of the life-process cannot again be lost. The concepts, however, at first a chief instrument of the power of the age, become on the new basis a path to liberation from the age.

Such a linking-up of the concepts with the ultimate problems of the spiritual life makes it superfluous to discuss the advantage of constructing a picture of the age from the standpoint of its chief concepts. These concepts give secure points of attachment, they make it clear beyond question in which directions a consolidation of the work of the age, a summation of the separate achievements, is taking place. At the same time they lead us to the inner life of the age, containing as it does all the unexpressed suppositions and hypotheses which prescribe a path for our thought and endeavour long before the matter has reached the stage of conscious reflection. Moreover, a study of concepts is particularly fitted to cause the common

content of the age to stand out from amidst all the confusion and opposition. Men often struggle hard over results, while employing the same concepts. At the same time, there may be division with respect to the concept itself (for example, in the case of "evolution"), but before the division begins a common body of conviction is affirmed. Even when one side totally rejects a certain concept (such as "metaphysics" or "the philosophy of history"), while the other side insists upon it, one must needs be a superficial observer in order not soon to perceive that even its supporters alter the concept (in particular in the sense of weakening it), and that the supporters and the opposers have drawn closer together as compared with their positions in previous ages. There can be no struggle without contact, and there can be no contact without some sort of community.

This holds good with respect to the main antithesis that runs through the whole work of the age, to the chief fighting line which links together the separate and apparently (though only apparently) scattered conflicts. There is no age of marked character which does not show such a subordination of multiplicity to a single great *either—or*. The analysis of concepts, in the first place, causes this main line of conflict to stand out from amidst the confusion of everyday opinion. Further, it indicates in and above the conflict, a community of convictions and ideas, and thus makes it clear that in all our divisions we remain the children of a single age and are subject to the same conditions of work. This discovery of an inner relationship in the age does not result in a uniform picture of the age. The multiplicity and the antitheses remain; they may even be more prominent than was formerly the case. But we have gained this fact, that all multiplicity fits itself into a single movement which embraces even the conflict itself. The more the science of concepts fixes great main lines and introduces into the original chaos an impulse towards construction, the more it becomes possible to review the age as a whole, to perceive in it the essential characteristics of the age.

This elucidation of its specific nature, brings us, at the same time, into a more free relationship to the age. The precise

delineation of the picture immediately destroys the matter-of-course nature of the framework with which the age at first surrounds us. He who knows definitely where and how he is dependent has already found the best road to freedom.

All these tasks find a powerful, nay an almost indispensable ally in the history of the concepts. That the concepts are not the children of the moment, but have their roots in the past, nay that they pass on to us capital that is the result of the labour of the whole of history, is demonstrated if only by the terms alone with their varied functions, borrowed from widely different ages and peoples. The work of millenniums lives again in the language that we employ day by day; here we may see the influence of ages that would otherwise have been long since forgotten. We may have but a poor opinion of mediæval scholasticism, but we cannot cease to employ in every scientific investigation, nay in every cultured conversation, expressions that were established by its diligent labour; as, for example, "subjective—objective," "ideal—real," "quantitative—qualitative," "immanent—transcendent," "*a priori—a posteriori*," "individuality," "maxim," and "motive."

If the chief phases of the historical development of a word still live in the speech of to day, then a glance at history will be of value in the task of distinction and clarification. For example the manifold variations now noticeable in the use of "idea" and "ideal," can hardly be understood without recollecting that "idea" signified with Plato an original being, superior to all the disintegration and movement of matter, with Descartes (according to the precedent of older French writers) a subjective image, and with Kant, a "necessary rational concept to which no congruous object can be given in the senses." In other cases, problems in the concept itself are exposed by the remarkable developments in the history of the word. For the treatment of the concepts "subjective" and "objective," for example, the fact cannot be of indifference that in the last two centuries the words have become absolutely reversed in significance. Since Duns Scotus (d. 1308) made them definite terms until the opening of the eighteenth century, "subjective" signified that which appertained to the *sub-*

stratum, or object (or according to modern terminology the objective element in the things); "objective," on the other hand, stood for that which was found in the perception (*objicere*) of the things, in the mere ideas they gave rise to (or, as we should say, the subjective element). The change did not take place until the eighteenth century.

But the history of the words is not that of the concepts. The concept can remain the same, while the expressions change; it can continue to be effective without being attached to any definite word. The experiences of a concept reveal a deeper view of the movement of thought. Stimulus and illumination are derived from the study of the conditions and environment in which a concept arose, of when and how it came to be prominent in our work, of the main phases it has run through down to the present day. There cannot very well be any question of the history of a concept, except in as far as a central element, a leading basic idea remains undisturbed by all change. A principal result of following up the history of the concepts should be the sharp separation of this permanent element from all that changes in the course of time, thus making the whole both more lucid and more plastic. Otherwise, the particular nature of the present day understanding of the concept easily remains undistinguished from the general idea; for example, social utilitarianism, with which we are to-day concerned, becomes utilitarianism in general, whereas in history we have also religious utilitarianism (for example, in the case of the Latin Fathers of the Church) and a political type (as in the Renaissance).

If a sufficiently large number of instances be considered, the history of the concepts throws light upon the relationship of our own age to the earlier epochs. It reveals our debt to the past, and it also reveals the points in which we assert independence of the past. In the case of concepts upon which we lay peculiar emphasis, we are usually resisting and shaking off the influence of tradition. Thus our age breaks away from the speculative-æsthetic epoch in such concepts as "fact," "experience," "real," "critical," and so forth; from the Enlightenment in "monism," "society" and the rejection of

all teleology; from scholasticism in "evolution," "immanence," "mechanical explanation of nature" and so forth. The main tendencies of the spiritual movement down to the separate points of difference here acquire a historical relationship. Moreover the feeling which the age here exhibits shows us that the past is not yet quite dead; its ideas are even to-day occupying and exciting men's minds. We learn what part of the past is more to the present than mere past. In this sense, the Middle Ages are living to-day—but not the Antique World.

But in spite of all that can be gained in this direction, the past continues to be to us something external and alien as compared with our own work. This state of things can be altered only by an extension and deepening of the whole treatment. The history of the concepts could never unite itself with our own aspiration towards truth if it showed us only a procession of changing opinions, a collection of individual interpretations of reality. That it really consists of something more than this, is shown, if in no other way, by the elementary power with which the great transformations of concepts carry humanity away and change the spirit of man's work. When, in the course of history, thoroughgoing changes take place in fundamental concepts (such as "soul," "inner life," "happiness," "subjective—objective," etc.), changes affecting civilised life as a whole, can this be explained merely by supposing, that particularly alert individuals had happy ideas which met with approval? Does it not far rather indicate that the struggle and labour of the separate individual was a means and instrument for the development of a more deeply grounded spiritual world, and that the changes of the concepts notify and fix developments and deepenings in the spiritual life-process itself? If, however, the history of the concepts reflects the gradual growth of a spiritual reality upon human soil then its chief results acquire a more than passing significance. For that which has once been verified as an element of that spiritual reality, remains an inner factor of all further movement; however much it may be obscured from the consciousness of peoples and epochs, it continues

to be operative whereve the world-historical task is taken up and continued. With its introduction to the relationships which form the basis of our spiritual existence, the history of the concepts is able to bring us into a more inward and more fruitful contact with the content of each particular age; it discovers behind the dead forms imperishable forces; it has the power to lift us out of the merely transitory present of the moment into a super-temporal present of common spiritual creation.

From this standpoint there necessarily develops a critical treatment of the immediate condition of our own age. This position of the world-historical work becomes a measure of the degree to which the particular age fulfils, or at any rate recognises, its task. It is true, the world-historical work does not surround us, as external nature does, as a given reality. But it speaks to us out of the works of humanity, out of art and literature, law and religion, it speaks also, if in softer tones, out of the inner soul-life of the separate individual. But such an invisible present is none the less a present, nay, ultimately a mightier one than that of sensuous impression. Of the achievement of the age that alone will be deeply and permanently operative which is in accordance with, or at any rate approaches, the demands of this world-historical position; that which is opposed to these demands, on the other hand, may excite and occupy men to any extent, for a time, but inwardly it is powerless, and finally evaporates leaving no trace behind it. Thus an invisible age appears behind the visible and becomes its judge, its conscience. The deep discontent, the distress, the inner depression, which weigh upon certain ages in spite of all their fulness of action, spring from the dim consciousness of a wide gulf between that which is inwardly necessary and that which actually takes place, nay, a complete opposition between the real need of the age, and that which is offered by the ordinary life of the period.

The science of concepts must, with all its power, help this true need of the age to secure recognition; and it can take up this task not only by way of a general review but also by starting from particular principal points. Each separate main

concept can and must permit of being tested as to whether the present-day understanding corresponds with the world-historical development, whether it takes up into itself the experiences and ideas contained in the latter, or whether it is sub-historical and remains behind these. To-day, in particular, this is often the case. Thus the main tendency of to-day is satisfied with a concept of happiness which seems to be ignorant of the deep upheavals of humanity at the time of transition from the Old World to the New, and the great uprising of the Modern Period with its scientific summits in Spinoza and Kant. The age often understands the concept of "fact" in such a crude fashion that one might imagine the deep division between thought and being, between the subject and the world, as perceived by Descartes and still further increased by Kant, had been suddenly overcome and a naïve condition of innocence re-established. Here, and in general, the study of concepts, in turning to history, must help to lead the endeavour of the age to the height of the world-historical work. But we cannot even seek for a core of history without a direct work of thought and an independent judgment upon the value of the things, and a deepening in history must in its turn contribute towards placing the work of reason, with its timeless nature, in a closer relationship with the condition of reality. The more the two sides of the task become united, the more directly will the science of concepts promote the clarification of ultimate convictions.

Such impulses towards a closer study of the concepts increase to an urgent summons when we turn to our own age. Now it is a question of our own spiritual condition: what content and what direction are imparted to our thought by the concepts of the age, and how far can we allow ourselves to be satisfied with what is thus imparted? It is obvious that the age of the daily newspaper and the machine must exert a peculiarly powerful pressure upon the individual; its influences, working in masses, stifle from the very beginning really personal activity and feeling; no other epoch has so reduced man to a mere cog in a great machine. In the case of the concepts themselves, however, progressive impulses and difficult obstacles

cut across one another. An immeasurable wealth of new experiences has broken up both the old forms and the old concepts. New bodies of thought strive upwards and make room for themselves, while these meet with resistance from the other side; the whole circle of our existence seethes with restless movement. This is accompanied by a lively consciousness and busy reflection; men try to formulate what they seize, to prepare comfortable handles for their ideas. No wonder that to-day there is so much discussion and conflict upon the subject of concepts! But at the same time we perceive a rapid wearing-down of concepts through their circulation in a so much larger circle, a hasty passing over the means and ways of the work to finished results, a withdrawal, nay, a disappearance of the general questions of human being, before the special problems of the separate departments. In consequence of this there is a great lack of clarity and maturity in the general concepts with which we are here concerned. And precisely those concepts in which the age expresses its feeling, remain, as regards their content, for the most part, in a state of uncertainty and twilight. How many of those who to-day talk enthusiastically about "culture," "evolution," "character," and "character-training," make even an attempt to get beyond the word to the concept? Further, we often see the formation of concepts taken in hand, with overmastering force, by separate bodies of thought whose power and might belong to a specific department. Thus, to-day, for example, the concepts of the mechanical theory of evolution (such as "self-preservation," "struggle for existence," "adaptation," "transmission," "heredity," and so forth) are extended almost as a matter-of-course in every direction. Such a sensibility to particular impulses easily places the concepts under opposed influences and causes them to be understood in contradictory senses. In the sphere of speculation, the "ideal" is looked upon as an illusion, but in that of conduct as good and necessary; from the standpoint of nature, society is to us a mere piecing together of separate elements, but from the point of view of practical work, an organism to which the individual is bound, as a member, to render service; freedom is as decisively rejected

for the cosmos as a whole and for the inner life of the soul, as it is affirmed for political and economic life. Can it be that there is no relationship whatever between the one and the other? All in all we have a great lack of inner solidarity and a serious lagging behind of the formal working-up of the concepts, as compared with the demands of the ever-increasing material which pours in upon us. We note also a sharp contrast between the highly developed systems of concepts in the special departments and the incomplete state of the concepts in life in general.

But all these deficiencies do not hinder the main tendencies in the work and endeavour of the present day finding clear expression in its concepts; here they both exhibit their capacity in contact with the things and become accessible to criticism. In the first place we perceive in the concepts that construction of the main antithesis which is peculiar to our age. Every powerfully moved age contains such an antithesis—each in its own special way. It is of great importance for all our action and aspiration that to-day this antithesis is of a highly general kind; it is obvious that throughout the whole length and breadth of our existence there is a struggle between tendencies of thought, which, for the sake of brevity, we may here refer to by their catchwords, *realism* and *idealism*. On the one hand there is an absorption of the man with his entire thought and conduct in a given reality, immediately embracing us, man in his social life, too, being a fragment of a larger nature. On the other, the chief reality is developed from an originative activity of the spirit, and there is an attempt to draw the whole of the rest of existence into this reality, or at any rate to render the former subordinate to the latter.

This antithesis dates from the very earliest times, but that it has now entered upon an entirely new phase is shown precisely by the struggle over the concepts. In earlier days, the realistic movement confined itself to great main features and found its task more in the opposition to idealism than in its own positive creative work. To-day the latter has become the principal thing; realism seeks to dominate reality in its entire extension and both on the theoretical and the practical sides to

satisfy with strict exclusiveness all those needs for which otherwise idealism seemed indispensable. It could not well attempt such an undertaking if immediate reality had not become incomparably more important to man, through the discovery of great groups, nay whole kingdoms of facts, as well as through the development of great life-embracing tasks. But the claim of naturalism goes far beyond this actual achievement, for it declares its aims to be the sole valid ones and its section of existence to be all-comprehensive. In order to carry through this claim it must widen the nature concepts until they become cosmic concepts, and fit to its measure not only the whole view of being, but psychic life also. In this way it comes into very violent conflict with idealism, which for historical reasons finds itself in possession of the field, and naturally defends its right. A fierce struggle for existence flares up along the whole line.

The new power which is thus striving to assert itself, advances not in one, but in two bodies of thought, one of larger and one of smaller scope. There is the less definite picture of sensuous reality, growing in its general impression, with the obviousness of which naturalism confronts idealism; and there is also the more precise image of the world, to which naturalism concentrates itself, employing the ideas of the mechanical theory of nature, with its measurements and movements. Both contribute to the general influence of the movement. It is precisely this amalgamation of a widely conceived view, pressing itself forward as if it were a matter-of-course, and its sharpening down to a more exact position, that gives to the whole that elementary power by virtue of which it advances against all resistance even down to the present day.

The world of concepts is influenced, directly and indirectly, by the united power of both. We have an example of direct influence when concepts or interpretations of concepts, taken from the visible world, and, in particular, from the soulless routine of nature, press forward on all sides and embrace the whole of reality. Thus, for example, nature is reckoned as equivalent to the *all*, and to be *real* appears the same as to be in external existence. Concepts like "object," "fact," "law,"

"evolution," and so forth, receive, on every hand, that particular interpretation which has proved itself true in the case of nature. In this process, the illustrative simile often serves as a bridge from the outer world to the soul. The mechanism of the soul was at first spoken of as a mere simile, but the simile frequently overmastered the thought and drew the concepts within the circle of ideas of naturalism. In the contrary sense, concepts appear to be finally dismissed because there is no room for them in sensuous reality. The rejection of metaphysics, of teleology, and so forth, is largely to be explained in this way; and for the same reason, too, it may even be said that an intellectual stain attaches to him who ventures upon any sort of concept of the supernatural, even when the attempt is made not as a disciple of Thomas Aquinas, but as a friend of Spinoza or Kant.

The more exactly we consider the way in which the separate concepts are understood to-day, the more we shall be impressed by this direct influence on the part of naturalism. Nevertheless this is probably surpassed by the indirect influence with which naturalism closely surrounds us; it forces upon us, as sole and conclusive (in such a fashion that we do not notice it) that general conception of the world and of life (with its great formative lines), that has sprung from the work done in the field of sensuous existence. Here we are closely netted by a fine meshwork of thought working from within and we often get only more and more deeply entangled in this, even when making a conscious effort to strike out in some quite opposite direction. When, for example, it appears, on every hand as if a world, ready-made in its chief things, a "given" world, lay at man's side and communicated itself to him from without; when the care of life consists in the most manifold contact and closest interweaving with this world, while at the same time that which comes from the object is looked upon as far more powerful and important than that which man contributes with his spirit; when on every hand the achievement is looked upon as the principal thing and the development of power as the highest good; when further the whole life-process is supposed to play itself out on the one level of immediate consciousness and

that which here offers itself is supposed to contain the ultimate explanation; and when the soul-life is treated as something quite subsidiary and its peculiar quantities are carefully kept away from the general conception of the whole—can we fail to recognise in all this (and we might add much more of the same kind) the influence of that particular conception of reality which the mechanical theory of nature develops and unceasingly manifests in its work? And is it not at the same time clear that in this way the whole formation of concepts is influenced from within in the most violent fashion and directed towards aims of which it is itself unconscious? In reality, it is in this direction, in particular, that the age develops its feeling and its claim to be accepted as a matter-of-course (as we have above described). Also where we are divided upon the ground of the age and split up into hostile camps, the difference is often merely that in the one case naturalism exerts its influence more directly and more openly, in the other more indirectly and more secretly. The critical examination of concepts has not only to follow this up more exactly into details; it must also ascertain what part of the real content of our work lends such power to naturalism; it must further investigate whether this achievement of the age corresponds with the demands both of the world-historical position of life and work, and of the rational nature of man.

A critique of naturalism upon the ground of the age itself is exercised by idealism with its affirmation of an independent spiritual world and its endeavour, from the more exact content of the latter, to impart a content and meaning to the whole of reality. But the concepts themselves proclaim, however, that this effort draws its power more from the results of the past than from the achievements of the present; no less do they announce that the historical powers continue to exert their influence far more in certain very general outlines and impulses than in their more specific characteristics. This is equally true of all the three chief traditional forms of idealism: the ethico-religious form (inner transformation), the æsthetical (artistic development), and the intellectual (pure thought). The first tendency gives us such concepts as "inner feeling,"

"conscience," "character," "duty," "good-in-itself" and so forth, concepts that naturalism can only transplant artificially upon its soil; it affirms a moral valuation of things which is securely superior to all the superficial wit and ingenuity of an "immoralism." The æsthetical view of life continues to operate in such concepts as "intellectual culture" (*Bildung*), "harmonious culture," "culture" (*Kultur*) and so on; further, too, in a general valuation of order, form and configuration. The disciples of the mechanical theory of nature often draw upon this tendency to complement and vivify their own view of life. "Evolution" would not sound so sweet in the ears of modern men and women if it did not echo the older understanding of the concept, with its idea of a regular, even progress, and a definite imparting of form from the power, and according to the laws, of a whole.

Intellectualism, with its transformation of all reality into a world-originating thought-process, reveals a constant inclination to identify intellect with spirit, intellectual with spiritual development, the general content of the thing with its concept; but upon its elevation of the work of thought above the merely psychic conditions are based concepts we can never lose, like those of "objective truth," "objective necessity," "objective reason," and so forth. Of peculiar strength is its influence upon the form of our work. Here we find the deepest roots of the endeavour to bring all the multiplicity of reality down to concepts, nay to principles, and to lead these principles into the field against one another. At the present day, what gives passion and intensity to the conflict in state and society, in science, art, and religion, more than the clash of such principles? Naturalism, too, cannot develop itself to a system of cosmic concepts without the help of this intellectual factor; to-day, even the denial of all principle calls itself opportunism and clothes itself with a garment of principle. Thus, thanks to the legacy of history, the age is not poor in movements which resist naturalism and moreover disintegrate it inwardly. But not only have these movements failed to arrive at a settlement among themselves; not one of them has attained to a consistent positive influence upon modern ground. These

individual opposition movements may inflict considerable injury upon naturalism; but they will not be able to overcome it.

It is no wonder that the age is witnessing the growth of an aspiration towards an idealism of a new and specific description, a mere universal form of idealism; a form that shall be in a position to value and appropriate the facts and truths revealed by the realistic movement. The aim of this aspiration seems incontestable and we cannot fail to recognise the conspicuous importance of individual achievements in this direction. But the average level of this movement appears, more especially as seen in its concepts, to be inadequate as compared with the demands made by the actual situation. The principal concepts often present themselves in such very abstract guise that they have no imperative and binding power. But little is gained when, as the result of all our labour, we maintain such ambiguous quantities as "spirit," "reason," "morality," "purpose" and so forth.

Moreover the affirmations inherent in the concepts are often so weakened, that although the opposition to current modern opinion is diminished, yet, at the same time, the whole characteristic nature and influence of the concepts is abandoned. The advocates of metaphysics, for example, often understand this concept in such a modest fashion that it does no more than add a subsequent hypothetical mode of contemplation to our other knowledge and does not effect an essential elevation of the whole. The concept of religion is no less suspended in the air when it is interpreted as a merely subjective feeling of the infinite. When thus watered down, the idealistic position becomes, for the first time, genuinely untenable; for now the whole imperative character of inner necessity is extinguished; now the entire position is made dependent upon a sympathetic mood, which may or may not be forthcoming. The little which still remains is now, more than ever, apt to seem too much. A similar lack of spirit on the part of idealism is the source of attempts to harmonise, through a dovetailing of the concepts, great antitheses that are in reality irreconcilable. Thus we hear much of inductive philosophy, of a real-idealism, of immanent, or even natural religion—all futile attempts to evade

the great *either—or* which runs through our human existence. We become aware, in general, here, of our inclination to soften down the sharpness of the problems, to hold fast, as an appearance, what has been given up in essence, to accept the consequences while rejecting the principles. All these are so many signs of the intimidation of idealism by the modern age, a confession of its lack of belief in itself. Its own inherent nature once for all places idealism in opposition both to the average position of the age and to the watered-down opinion of the general level. Idealism pays too dearly for the attempt to make itself more acceptable through a pleasing adaptation and timid justification; for it thereby loses everything that makes it strong and valuable. In matters of this kind, the greater can be easier than the lesser. It is a question of courage and of the power of originative creation. These we must and shall rediscover; but perhaps the discovery will not come until we are in need, until we stand at the edge of the precipice.

It is seen, therefore, that in the consciousness of the age there is no systematic, idealistic thought-structure to counteract naturalism. But the latter has another full-grown opponent, which is certainly not to be reckoned to idealism, but which is undoubtedly closely connected with one of the latter's chief forms, namely with intellectualism. We refer to *subjectivism*, that free development of the individual which emancipates him from all systematic bodies of thought, and sets him in a position of supposed independence with respect to the world, thereby demanding that all reality shall be exhibited as such to the separate individual and the whole content of life be developed from his standpoint. At the same time the existence of the individual transfers itself wholly into his immediate ideas and feelings. It is the idea, in particular, which thrusts itself between the man and the object and with its reflection, continually transforming the objects into images, ultimately threatens to dissolve the whole of reality into nothing but phenomena, into a mere realm of shadows. Since there is an endless multiplicity of individuals, each with his own specific position, the different tendencies ramify in all possible direc-

tions; there develop, side by side with one another, a varied wealth of opinions with all the changes of a kaleidoscope, and if each of these tries to make itself valid beyond its own individual point, there must ensue of necessity an endless conflict of each against all and all against each. We are thus apt to get a state of affairs in which each tries to outdo the other; there is a scramble after what is striking, sensational, paradoxical, an ever-increasing disappearance of the objective nature of the things, an extinction of the feeling for what is true and healthy, and, in short, a continuous sinking of the level of life to the point of complete disintegration.

To the various stages of this process of disintegration we find corresponding stages in the formation of concepts. In the first place, the whole life of civilisation shows a stronger development of concepts giving distinct prominence to the subjective aspect of the life-process, and to the relationship of occurrences to this aspect. In this way alone can we explain the preference for concepts like "appearance," "value," "theory of knowledge," "critical," "optimism—pessimism," and so forth; in this way alone may we understand the unceasing care to effect a right delimitation of subjective and objective, and the endeavour to deduce the fundamental spiritual processes (for example, art, morality, religion, and their concepts) "psychologically" from the subject.

This subjective tendency makes its appearance in a more pointed form in the emphasis laid upon the differences between individuals and upon the equal rights of all. It is this tendency of the age that permits us to use, daily, concepts like "standpoint," "point of view," and "opinion." Further it compels us moderns to consider even the best established doctrines and concepts not so much as products of a thought-process embracing us within a superior necessity, but as the subjective attempts of a puzzling and tentative reason. Even in the case of creative work we cannot turn away from ourselves; with all our effort we cannot get away from the subject. How great is the difference here between the systems, say, of Kant or Hegel, with their compelling and unifying ideas, and such systems as that of Lotze, that in the midst of all pure endeavour

to reach the actual matter itself and all its tenacious energy of thought never lets us forget for a moment that we are listening to the opinion of an individual—a highly intelligent individual—but still an individual.

With this subjectivity, the modern mode of thought certainly gives us an amazing freedom in the handling of concepts, an inexhaustible power of bringing forward now one side and now another, and of continually placing the concepts in new relationships; in short we obtain all the advantages of a highly developed, freely poised reflection. But the more such reflection leaves out of sight the actual matter itself and the more the freedom degenerates into self-will, the more the solidarity of spiritual creative work is broken up, with the formation of innumerable sects, the more helplessly the concepts must follow every change of situation and of mood, and the more inevitable becomes the temptation exactly to reverse their natural and simple meanings. It may even be said that such a rank growth of subjective self-will must finally inwardly destroy all concepts, as fixed and definite images of thought, held in common, and again throw men back upon changing and unstable ideas. We thus relapse completely into sophistry, albeit under the guise of high-sounding names. And all this takes place side by side with the most exact scientific and technical work in the various separate departments!

In our age, this subjectivism is involved with naturalism, in the most remarkable fashion. Out of simultaneous attraction and repulsion there arises a state of absolutely inextricable confusion. Subjectivism and naturalism travel a good way hand in hand. They are at one in their rejection of a substantial idealism; while both place the whole life-process on the one level of immediate consciousness, and both split reality up into innumerable separate elements. When, further, naturalism looks upon all spiritual life as a mere phenomenon accompanying the nature-process, it can hardly understand this life, with respect to its content, otherwise than as a mere mental idea, a reflection of that which is taking place in the real world without. For example, the equivalence of soul and consciousness, and the prefixing of the concept "phenomenon" in

the case of nature and soul, bear clear witness to such an inner agreement.

But it is precisely this agreement that makes all the more intolerable that contradiction between the two tendencies, which any careful consideration of their more detailed nature must force into prominence. The two points of departure and the two tendencies of thought stand in complete opposition to one another; and the content of reality is fundamentally different in the two cases. On the one hand, nature is the enduring, the all-embracing, the all-producing; on the other, the mental image is the sole certainty, and nothing is real for us that is not contained in it. In the one case, the soul is precipitated by the nature-process; in the other, nature is a mere phenomenon in the life of the soul. With naturalism, objective reality takes the first place, with subjectivism, the condition of the subject. In the first case, we have the immense solidity of the kingdom of ponderable quantities; in the second, the volatile lightness of a realm of airy thoughts. A mutual understanding, under these circumstances, is completely out of the question: for each aims at being the whole and must desire full validity—in which case, however, the other is given a significance that it cannot by any possibility accept. In spite of this, the age effects a certain adjustment of these irreconcilable adversaries: in the case of material things it follows the view based upon nature, with its wealth and its obviousness; in the form of life, however, subjectivism rules, with its plasticity. In this way, not only do we fall under the influence of conflicting bodies of thought, being drawn now in this direction, now in that, and compelled to fight against that with which we cannot dispense, but each one of the two sides suffers the severest injury. The analytical and all-penetrating subjective reflection makes the naturalism spiritless and senile; it causes the latter, in its spiritual creative work, to lose just that impulsive youthful strength which forms its chief justification; while, on the other side, the plastic thought is paralysed and crushed to the ground through deriving its content from the nature-process alone.

Thus the life of the age in its most specific nature is rent by a destructive contradiction. It is impossible that it can come

to rest in itself. Idealism, too, in its present form does not carry us beyond this situation, partly on account of its inner division, partly on account of its lack of strong characteristic form. When, therefore, to-day, the age, by means of the concepts, draws the individual to itself, it does not place him in any safe path or assign him any peaceful task; it leads him, on the contrary, into complications so serious that they must become unbearable as soon as we become clearly conscious of them.

In the case of such a confused and divided state of things it is obvious that if we desire to rise beyond it, we cannot possibly be satisfied merely with bettering something here or there, with making this or that alteration. The whole becomes problematical. A thoroughgoing renewal of our intellectual existence and with it of the state of our concepts (that is of the *general* concepts, with which alone we are concerned at present) is clearly an urgent need, an imperative demand.

For a more detailed development of my convictions with respect to these problems the reader is referred to my large work: *Main Currents of Modern Thought.* At present there is only one thing more to be said. The forward movement of naturalism which is so characteristic of our age, is certainly based upon great experiences and contains fruitful germs for the further development of our life as a whole. But the ultimate meaning and true spiritual significance of that which is here striving to assert itself, cannot be deduced from the immediate impression and from without; only a life-process embracing it and illuminating it from within can decide as to this. The present age, however, does not possess a superior activity which takes to itself the work of each separate department and meets the result with an originative creation based upon the whole. This triumphal advance of naturalism shows that the objective, although in reality so deeply rooted in the spiritual work, has separated itself from the later, and (as if founded in itself) now sets itself up against the spiritual as though it (*i.e.*, the objective) were an alien thing. The created works have separated themselves from the creative force; as compared with the latter they have become gigantic and direct themselves against it

with titanic defiance, endeavouring finally wholly to repress it. But the more this movement progresses, the more strongly it must be realised that these works of the spirit live, after all, only by virtue of communicated power. This power must withdraw itself from them more and more, with their growing alienation from the mother soil; and thus their content will grow ever poorer and poorer, and human existence, in spite of all its activity, become increasingly empty. With correspondingly greater force, however, we feel ourselves urged at the same time towards a concentration and fresh development of the spiritual life, so that its living unity may become equal to the works, so that in the face of dissolution, it may assert itself as a whole, and again draw to itself that which has been alienated, in as far as the latter has not become permanently hostile. In the case of a task so gigantic that, according to the present appearance of things, it even seems impossible, philosophy can work only side by side with other powers, and the rôle assigned to the investigation of concepts is a modest one indeed. This sketch should show, however, that rightly treated it is able nevertheless to contribute something.

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